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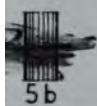
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SELUNGE

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THE SELUNGS
OF THE
MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO.

BY
JOHN ANDERSON, M.D., LL.D. EDIN., F.R.S.

WITH FOUR PLATES.

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P R E F A C E.



THE observations on the Selungs of the Mergui Archipelago, embodied in the following short notice of that people, were made during my visit to the Archipelago in the end of 1881 and the beginning of 1882. Owing to my ignorance of the language, all my inquiries had to be made through two interpreters, one a Burman, who knew Selungese, and the other an Anglo-Burman, who understood English and Burmese, both illiterate men. This circumstance rendered my task most arduous, and I always felt, even after I had repeatedly sifted and tested the information supplied to me, that, after all, I might not have arrived at a correct understanding of it. I have therefore confined myself to recording the simple and evident facts that came under my notice. This little treatise, however, will have served its purpose should it prove the means of leading any on the spot to a more exhaustive study of the Selungs, their origin, their traditions, and their speech.

My thanks are due to Professor Sir William Turner, General Horace A. Browne, and Dr. Rost for the information they so willingly gave me on the questions I submitted to them for their individual opinions.

THE SELUNGS

OF THE

MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO.

THOMAS FORREST, Senior Captain of the Honourable East India Company's Marine at Fort Marlboro in 1770, and author of "A Voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas," visited the Mergui Archipelago in 1783. Nine years afterwards he published¹ the results of his observations, and gave a very good description of the islands so far as they were known to him; but the only proof of human inhabitants he saw was a fire which he observed at night on James Island.

The first notice of the inhabitants of the Mergui Archipelago appeared in the Calcutta Government Gazette for the 2nd March, 1826. The information contained in this account of the people was doubtless derived from observations made on the spot by the British officers stationed at Mergui, immediately after the capture of that town by the troops and fleet of the East India Company. It was republished, in 1827, by Horace Hayman Wilson,² and, in the succeeding year, it was reproduced in a slightly modified form by Walter Hamilton.³ In this account it is said, "A race of men, termed by the Burmese Chalome⁴ and Pase,⁵ are to be found scattered throughout the Mergui Archipel-

¹ Voyage from Calcutta to the Mergui Archipelago. 4to. London, 1792.

² Documents Illustrative of the Burmese War. Calcutta, 1827.

³ East India Gazetteer, &c. Vol. ii. p. 226. London, 1828.

⁴ This is evidently the same word as Selung.

⁵ The Burmese apply the term *Pashú* or *Pathé* to the Malays. Maxwell, Miscellaneous Papers relating to Indo-China (1886), vol. i. p. 187, *f.n.* *Pase* doubtless a modification of it.

ago. But their dread of Malayan and other pirates has compelled these poor creatures to adopt an unsettled mode of life. During the north-east monsoon, they are obliged to remove from the vicinity of those islands which are most frequented, to escape being carried off as slaves by Siamese, Burmans, and Malays, who then visit them in quest of the valuable commodities they afford. They appear to be a harmless, and, from necessity, an industrious race. The whole tribe consists of no more than four hundred souls. They exchange mats and the produce of the islands for clothes and other articles, conveyed to them from Mergui. Another tribe of this race is thinly spread over the islands lying close in front of Mergui. They all seem to have adopted the religion of Buddha, and to have conformed, in a great degree, to the Burman mode of dress. They scarcely know the value of money, and are therefore losers in the bartering trade with the Chinese and others who visit them. Perhaps they think themselves the greater gainers, since they give away products of no use to them for others of vital importance, and are, thereby, enabled to maintain a degree of wild independence."

In 1838, Captain R. Lloyd, who had surveyed the Mergui coast in 1827-30, contributed a short paper to the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the "Mergui Coast-Line and Islands,"¹ in which he gave some particulars about the *Chillones*, which he stated was the term generally applied to them. He described them as a roving tribe, who passed from one island to another, living partly in their boats, and in temporary sheds which they erected with a few sticks and leaves on the little sandy beaches interspersed among the islands. They appeared unacquainted with the art of cultivation, and subsisted chiefly upon shell-fish and turtle, and other productions indigenous to the islands, disposing at Mergui and other places of the turtle-shells, *bêche-de-mer*, and other articles they collected, in barter for a little rice and coarse cloth. He further stated that they were to be found chiefly amongst the outer islands during the fine season, and on the setting in of the rains, they returned to the inner ones, and for the right to frequent and live upon the islands, he believed they paid a small tax to Government of one rupee per head annually. . . . He understood that there were three or four divisions or families of them, known under different names, according to the part of the

¹ Journ. As. Soc. Bengal, vol. vii. pt. ii., 1838, pp. 1027 and 1038.

Archipelago they confined themselves to. They were a harmless race, badly clothed, miserable in appearance, and probably not amounting to more than a thousand persons altogether; they were found to be extremely shy of strangers.

Captain M'Leod, who frequently visited the islands, and felt interested in the people, drew the Rev. Mr. Kincaid's attention to them.¹ This missionary made a tour in their Archipelago, and writing from their midst in 1838, he observed:—"The scenery is uncommonly fine and picturesque. The ocean on every side, spotted with a thousand green islands and islets, all densely wooded, and of all sizes and forms. Some low and very level, others with bold rocky shores, rising into mountain ridges. The climate too, must be delightfully pleasant. One cannot help exclaiming, 'this is a beautiful world'—'man alone is vile.' . . . I am now surrounded by about three hundred souls, men, women and children, entirely free from all religion. They have no God, no temple, no priest, no liturgy, no holy day, and no prayers. In their domestic habits they are free from all conventional rules. They are very poor, too, having no houses, no gardens, no cultivated fields, nor any domestic animals, but dogs. I never saw such abject poverty, such an entire destitution of all the comforts of life."

Dr. John William Helfer,² a young Austrian physician and naturalist, who had been impelled by an irresistible love of exploration to visit the East, was employed by the East India Company, on his arrival in Calcutta, to explore the province of Tenasserim and report on its resources. A paper written by him, in 1839, on the inhabitants of Tenasserim³ contains a description of this people, whom he mentions under the name of Seelongs. He describes them as a race distinct from the Talaiings, Burmese, Siamese, and Karens, all of whom are found in the province of Tenasserim, and as a tribe of wandering fishermen inhabiting the islands of the Archipelago, and "building temporary huts of reeds, palm-leaves, and bamboos during the inclemency of the monsoon, and passing the rest of the year either in boats or on the sea-beach under the shade of trees;"

¹ *Burma, its People and Natural Productions, &c.* By Rev. F. Mason. Rangoon, 1860, p. 99.

² *Travels of Dr. and Madame Helfer in Syria, Mesopotamia, Burmah, and other Lands*, vol. i., 1878, preface.

³ *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. viii. pt. ii. pp. 973-1005.

and, after making a statement about their food similar to that made by Lloyd, he adds that they never cultivate the ground, and have a "peculiar language, but too little is known of it to determine whether it is a mixture of the languages spoken around them, or a peculiar tongue."

In Helfer's day they were as timid as they are now, for he states that it was very difficult to meet them among the islands, as they hid themselves away whenever they saw a strange sail approaching. He succeeded, however, on the 1st July, 1838,¹ in getting among an encampment of seventy persons, who, when they found that the stranger was a white man, welcomed him, and behaved with remarkable civility and decorum, which was exactly my own experience when I was among them. He gives a short account of their mode of life, of the structure of their boats and dwellings, their food, their occupations, beliefs, and method of disposing of their dead. His short notice of them, however, is disfigured by an erroneous statement regarding their physical features, as he says "the curly hair of some of them especially speaks in favour of a negro origin;" and hints that this might be explained by their having had communication with the Andamanese. He also errs in describing as seaweed the substance of which their mats are made; and it may be as well to point out that Helfer is the only author who has recorded amber as a product collected by the Selungs.

I cannot accept the statement made by him that they are an indolent people, as it is opposed to all my observations, and to all I learned from themselves and from the Chinese traders regarding their mode of life. Their poverty Helfer attributed to indolence, but in the sentence immediately preceding that in which he makes this charge he says that "by all who have to do with them (Chinese and Malays) they are provided with toddy in the first instance, and, during the subsequent state of stupor, robbed of any valuables they possess." That this vile course was occasionally resorted to by traders visiting the islands is an undoubted fact, but there is no evidence that it was distinctive of all their intercourse with the Selungs, whose poverty was to be explained not merely by the depredations committed on them, but by the system of barter by which they disposed of their goods,

¹ Dr. Johann Wilhelm Helfer's "Gedruckte und Ungedruckte Schriften über die Tenasserim-Provinzen den Mergui-Archipel, und die Andamanen-Inseln." Wien, 1860, p. 183.

and which gave to dishonest traders the opportunity to fleece them. This state of things, however, is now much improved, but so long as the barter system exists—and it is still prevalent—and so long as their love of strong drink is pandered to by the traders who deal with them, the Selungs will remain poor.

Five years subsequent to Mr. Kincaid's visit, the Rev. Mr. Wade directed the attention of the public to the Selungs.¹ Writing from Mergui during the time that Major Broadfoot, the hero of the "Illustrious Garrison" of Jalálábád, was Commissioner of Tenasserim, Mr. Kincaid says:—"I will here record the kindness of our Commissioner to the poor Selungs, a race of people dwelling in the islands between Mergui and Penang, far below the Karens in knowledge and civilisation, despised, abused, and robbed by Chinese, Malays, and all the surrounding tribes; whose only means of livelihood is fishing, and fabricating a species of mats. The Commissioner gave them a supply of rice, did everything in his power to inspire them with confidence, particularly with the view of inducing them to learn to read, and gave a thousand rupees from his own purse, to aid in reducing their language to writing and in the establishment of schools among them."

Mason states that Sir Henry Durand, when he held the Commissionership of these provinces,² also took a deep interest in the welfare of this people, and he quotes the following interesting communication from his pen, written in 1846:—

"When proceeding from Mergui to the Pakchan, I gave permission to the Rev. Mr. Brayton, of the American Baptist Mission, to embark on board the Honourable Company's Steamer 'Proserpine,' and on passing the island of Lampee, he was landed in Marble Island Bay.

"The object of this gentleman's visit to the island of Lampee was of a purely missionary character, with reference to the Salones; and I took advantage of his visit to request that he would have the goodness to assemble as many of the Salones as could conveniently be brought together, in order that on the return of the steamer I might have an opportunity of communicating with them.

¹ Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

² Captain Henry Marion Durand, in after years Sir Henry, was apparently appointed Commissioner of Tenasserim in 1841. Life of Major-General Sir H. M. Durand, K.C.S.I., C.B., R.E., vol. i., 1883, p. 89.

"On my return from the Pakchan to Marble Island Bay, I found forty Salone boats assembled. Each boat was said to contain on an average ten individuals, men, women and children. The boats were excellent, and the appearance of the people neither so savage nor miserable as from their mode of life might have been anticipated. They were decently clad, and seemed not at all deficient in intelligence. The humane exertions of my predecessor to induce these people to enter upon a more civilised mode of life, and to attempt cultivation, and the formation of villages failed; but encouraged by the example of a Salone family from one of the islands to the southward of our territories, the Lampee Salones are now meditating the establishment of two small villages, one of six, and another of five houses. The Salone who has set the example has cultivated between two and three acres. The family state that the islands to the southward of the British territories are frequented by Salones in greater numbers than those in the Mergui Archipelago, and that some of the southern Salones have taken to cultivation, and form permanent villages. . . .

"One of my objects in assembling the Lampee Salones was to ascertain whether they had, during this dry season, been visited by Malay boats, their great dread. I was happy to learn that these timid, unresisting people had, during the dry season, been free from molestation, and carried on their sea-slug collections undisturbed and successfully.

"Formerly the Salones paid a tax to Government of three rupees a boat, but the tax was discontinued by my predecessor, and I have not imposed any new one upon them, nor do I intend it. Their sea-slug collection is not unproductive, the slug selling at the rate of thirty to the rupee; but, with the exception of a few mats, the making of which is the south-west monsoon occupation, the sea-slug forms their only wealth; it is caught, or rather dug up, during the north-east monsoon, at the period of low water in spring tides, and it is from the value of this article in the Mergui market that they obtain the means of purchasing rice, salt, and clothes. Their food is rice, fish, and shell-fish; a few hogs are also caught and killed by the aid of their numerous dogs, and some of the Lampee Salones had fowls with them. When, as frequently occurs, the Salones have expended their rice, they have resort to a wild root which grows in abundance, and which, after much maceration in

water, parts with its poisonous matter, and becomes safe and edible.

"I have no means of ascertaining or estimating the number of Salones in the Mergui Archipelago. Any guess must be a very random one. At Lampee, a favourite Salone place of resort, I suppose that instead of forty, with timely warning, nearly a hundred boats might have been assembled, but it is their best frequented place of wandering. What the forests are to the Karens, the sea and the coasts of the islands of the Mergui Archipelago are to the Salones. The latter, having boats, dispense with houses altogether, and are therefore still more migratory in their habits than the Karens. These are habits which it will require much time and favouring circumstances to break."

By the efforts of the missionaries in 1846, it would appear that forty-six Selungs were baptized in that year, and that a school was established among them.

In the year 1850, J. R. Logan published a short account¹ of this people. He says they are closely allied to the races of the adjacent south-eastern peninsula, and are a mild, peaceful, and honest race, little given to crime, and states that "they believe in *nâts* or spirits that dwell in the sea, land, air, trees, and stones, but do not invoke or sacrifice to them, nor are they symbolised." This statement, however, as will afterwards appear, is not quite in keeping with our present knowledge, as they not only address the great *nât*, but also make offerings to another spirit. Their nomadic habits, their boat life, their squatting under trees, or on the beaches till the monsoon becomes severe when they construct slight huts, their subsisting entirely on turtle, fish, and shell-fish, and their timidity and reserve, Logan mentions as characteristics possessed by them in common with most of the *Orang Laut* or sea-men who frequent the creeks, islands, and solitary shores of both sides of the Malay Peninsula and the Johore Archipelago. The Selungs, however, cannot be said to confine their diet to the products of the sea, as rice forms an important part of it, and is correctly placed first in Sir Henry Durand's account of the food they eat.

Lieutenant Burn, writing in 1858 to the Deputy Commissioner of the Tenasserim provinces at Mergui, called the attention of

¹ Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia (Singapore), vol. iv., 1850, pp. 411-412.

his superior officer to the circumstance that the abject poverty said by Mr. Kincaid to have been distinctive of the Selungs in his day was equally true of them in 1858. In view of this, it is remarkable that while Lieutenant Burn was thus deploring the miserable condition of the Selungs, he should have proposed to add to their burdens by imposing a tax of five rupees a head on their fishing operations, and that their feeble attempts at cultivating the land—a labour confined to a few families in one of the islands near Mergui, doubtless King Island—should also be taxed. Notwithstanding Durand's abolition of the taxation of this neglected race, Lieutenant Burn's unreasonable and heartless proposals met with the support of his superior officer, but were happily considerably modified.

In 1860, Mr. H. C. Menzies, a more enlightened Deputy Commissioner of Mergui, took a lively interest in the Selungs, and communicated a number of facts regarding their customs and ways of life¹ to the Commissioner of Tenasserim, and urged that Chinese traders should be prohibited from selling either opium or *samshu* to them; but if his recommendations were ever carried out, they were not in force during my visit to the islands, in 1881-82, as will appear from what will be stated farther on. On my return from the Archipelago, I felt it my duty to do exactly as Mr. Menzies had done, and whose action in the matter was at the time unknown to me, and to advocate that the barter of spirituous liquors to the Selungs should be prohibited; but I am not aware what success, if any, attended my efforts.

The following islands are the headquarters of the Selungs, viz.: 1st, St. Matthew and St. Luke; 2nd, Sullivan and Clara; 3rd, Loughborough; 4th, Owen and Malcolm; 5th, Bentinck; 6th, Elphinstone and Ross, including Maingy and King Islands; and 7th, Tavoy Island. The people found on any one of these groups generally confine themselves to it, and do not wander from one group to another. There are accordingly Selungs of St. Matthew and St. Luke, others of Sullivan and Clara, and so on; and it is a curious fact they keep so much by themselves that a Selung from Sullivan Island has great difficulty in understanding the speech of one of his race from Elphinstone Island, the two islands being only about eighty miles apart.

¹ The substance of Mr. Menzies' observations is referred to in my own account of the people.

It is only of recent years that any reliable information has been obtained regarding their numbers. Shortly after the annexation of Mergui (1824), it was supposed by the British officers then in charge of the town, that the Selung population of the Archipelago did not exceed 400, but fifteen years afterwards Helfer calculated it at 1000. In 1860, a Selung who had been taken into the service of Government as a kind of intermediary between his people and the British officials at Mergui, computed the population at 1200 persons, but Mr. Menzies, the Deputy-Commissioner, considered that it did not probably exceed 1000. In the "British Burma Gazetteer," published about twenty years later on, it is said that the number of the Selungs "does not probably exceed from 3000 to 4000," a guess which was proved by the census of 1880-81 to have been very much in excess of the real numbers, as the entire Selung population was returned at 868 persons; hence the calculations of Helfer and Menzies were much nearer the truth.

Helfer's supposition that the Selungs were rapidly becoming extinct does not appear to have been based on any reliable grounds; nor is it verified by their history since his day.

While at King Island, in February 1882, I visited a comparatively recent settlement of Selungs at a place called by them Yimiki, the *Yaymyitgyee* of the Burmese. I reached it by crossing the island from the village of Kabaing, at the head of King Island Bay. From this village, composed of Karens and a few Burmese, a tolerably good path first passes over clearings, and then through forest wonderfully free of undergrowth, across a ridge of no great height to the settlement of Yimiki, situated at the head of a creek some distance from the sea. A Karen acted as my guide, and four porters of the same race carried my baggage, my vessel having preceded me round the northern end of the island, to await me at the Burmese fishing-station of Kaiawgyee.

The settlement was situated in a comparatively level clearing, along which ran a mountain stream. The majority of the trees had been cut down, but not a few bare gaunt stems stood branchless and charred, attesting to the destructive character of the fire by which the clearing had been effected, but which had left many of the fallen trees unconsumed. Immediately after my arrival the headman appeared, accompanied by a little boy, and he

was soon afterwards followed by some other men, but no women appeared, as I was told that, through fright at my presence, they had fled to the forest, as they were afraid some of them might be carried off. The men, however, promised to remove those fears and bring them back, and accordingly, on the following morning, some of them mustered courage to appear at my tent door, and a more hideous group I had never before seen. Their dress in some cases was of the most meagre description, and one woman sitting on the trunk of a tree with her child on her lap appeared to be naked, as the little clothing she wore was hidden by her baby, but generally they were clad like Burmans of the very poorest class, but with this difference, that the body above the waist was left naked both in the men and women. This meagre clothing is all obtained by barter, but the women can sew, their needles and thread being obtained by the same means.

An old woman, with unkempt white locks, came carrying her grandchild tied to her back by a cloth passed round her shoulders. She was a veritable "black and midnight hag," blind of one eye; and as she stood before me leaning on her staff, her breasts hanging down from her bowed and wrinkled form like two collapsed leather bags, I asked myself if it were possible to conceive of a more repulsive example of humanity, and I unhesitatingly answered in the negative.

The physical appearance of these people will be better understood by the accompanying photographs of two groups than by any description I can give of them. Plate i. is a group of Selungs taken at Elphinstone Island, while Plate ii. was photographed in the verandah of the house of the principal Chinese trader in Mergui, where the subjects of the picture had arrived to exchange some of their goods for rice and cloth. Both pictures were taken by the wet process, and as the people had never before been photographed, I experienced considerable difficulty in coaxing them to submit themselves to the ordeal, and the adverse conditions under which both plates were taken is my apology for the imperfect character of the pictures. I, however, did not succeed in obtaining any representations of the Yimiki Selungs; but as they stated that they had emigrated from the neighbouring islands known as the Doang group, and as these were my next destination, I hoped to be more successful there, and in this I was not disappointed. I arrived there three days after my visit to Yimiki, with my impressions of the people still fresh in my

memory, and it was evident to me that they were the same race. How they had come to settle here will be presently explained.

The little settlement at Yimiki consisted of two groups of houses, one belonging to the headman, who, with the members of his family, appeared to be in fairly comfortable circumstances, and the other to some recent settlers, who were in abject poverty. There were four houses in the first group, built after the fashion of Burmese houses, and tenanted by the headman and his three sons-in-law, while in the second group there were eight miserable hovels, raised on rickety stakes about three feet from the ground. Each of these squalid huts measured about twelve feet by nine feet, with a height of about five feet, roofed with leaves, and walled and floored with bark in the rudest possible fashion, like the temporary dwellings of those Selungs who still adhere to their maritime habits of life as sea-gypsies. Furniture, properly so called, was unknown in these hovels. A mat laid on the bark floor and a mat pillow filled with the cotton of *Bombax malabaricum* constituted their beds, and a few earthen pots their cooking utensils, supplemented with some coarse Chinese bowls, and gourds slung in ratans for holding fresh water. Their surroundings were extremely filthy, as the ground was littered with the refuse of their meals, decaying rice, yams, plantains, and fish, and the half-emptied shells of oysters, mussels, and other molluscs.

On questioning the headman how he came to settle at Yimiki, he stated that he had been induced to do so, to escape the hardships and privations that had to be endured in moving about in boats from place to place among the islands in order to eke out a subsistence, the uncertainty of food supplies, and the absence of permanent dwellings. On his visits to King Island in search of honey, wax, and *pwai-nyet*, he had met with some Karens who had settled there, and having mentioned to them his wish to abandon his sea-life for agriculture, they had advised him to settle at Yimiki, and he stated that he did not regret having done so.

The squalid poverty of the other Selungs in the settlement he accounted for by the circumstance that they had only been settled about one year.

These people still retained their boats, which lay in the creek close to the clearing, and in them they proceeded to the coast to spear fish and collect shell-fish for food, but they had

given up collecting *bêche-de-mer* and harpooning the giant devil-fish, as these operations are only carried on in the more westerly islands. I consequently found them willing to dispose of the large and heavy harpoon (Plate iv. fig. 3) used in the capture of devil-fish, and which my Burmese boatmen told me I would fail to obtain from the Selungs at Elphinstone Island, as it was too valuable a weapon to them to be parted with at any price. It has been replaced at Yimiki by the *dah* and the axe for felling trees, these implements being supplied to them by the Karens.

Attempts at agriculture similar to those at Yimiki have now and again been made by the Selungs in various islands of the Archipelago, but in no instance do they appear to have been attended with permanent success. But I believe that if these attempts were encouraged by Government, and proper clearings were effected on some of the islands adapted to the prosecution of agriculture and to the planting of dorian, mangosteen, and areca nut gardens, the Selungs, with a little pecuniary aid, and assisted in their efforts by the practical knowledge of men accustomed to the clearing of forest tracts, a great deal might be done to develop the terrestrial resources of as beautiful an archipelago as exists on the globe, but which is now entirely neglected. What with its splendid forests full of valuable timber, the richness of its soil, the suitability of its climate to the culture of certain tropical fruits and the economic treasures found in its seas, there is no reason why, were these resources nurtured and developed by an enlightened administration, the entire Archipelago should not be peopled by a thriving population.

From King Island I proceeded to the group of islands lying to the west of it, known to the Selungs as the Doang group, and of which Elphinstone, Ross and Grant islands are the largest.

My Malay captain, who did not bear a very good character at Mergui except for his seamanship, advised me, as we approached these lovely islands, to allow him to anchor for the night at some spot where we would not be likely to be seen by the Selungs, who, if they once espied our vessel, would immediately disperse, and there would be no finding them. We accordingly anchored alongside a small island covered with dense forest, as all these islands are, and which shut us out from the great bay on the eastern side of Elphinstone Island, which is a favourite resort of

the Selungs of this part of the Archipelago. On the following morning we were up by sunrise, and, as had been previously arranged, I donned a Burmese *putzo* over my nether garments, and put on a Chinaman's jacket and hat, in order to appear in the distance as a Chinese trader come to barter with them. We started in a dug-out over a rippling sea flooded with the light of the newly risen sun, and after paddling about a mile we rounded our sheltering island, and passing through a narrow channel formed by another island on which the Selungs deposit their dead, we entered the beautiful bay, landlocked on all sides, except towards the south. We had not proceeded far into the bay when we observed some Selung boats drawn up on the beach facing us. We now paddled with renewed vigour, my excitable captain exclaiming that the sight of the Selung boats gave him strength, and as we neared them we saw some men on the shore. My crew of three worked still harder, if possible, with their paddles; but as our tiny craft shot along and we neared the shore, the Selungs disappeared into the forest. Notwithstanding this disappointment, on we went, and when we arrived within shouting distance, we heard the Selungs calling out and warning their comrades of our approach, whilst my men in their turn tried to reassure them by making the hillsides reverberate with the names of the head Selung and his wife, Hamat and Appen, which they had learned at Yimiki. After this had been frequently repeated, it had the desired effect, as a Selung was seen emerging from the forest; and as we were now within speaking distance, we brought our man-hunt to a close, and ceased paddling. Seeing this, the Selung gained confidence, and when we called to him in his own language, "*nyn nakoat*"—don't be afraid—he came down to the beach accompanied by two dogs. As the Selungs generally know a little Burmese, my people told him of our experiences at Yimiki, and this so calmed his fears that he was prevailed on to call in his comrades, and first the men appeared, and afterwards the women and children. We then ventured to land, and soon became good friends. On walking across the beach, I found that the women had been engaged in making mats, while some of their husbands had been away in the forest looking out for honey, wax, and *pwai-ngyet*. A rude fireplace indicated that they had been cooking, and as there was no stream close at hand, their supply of fresh water had been obtained by digging holes in the sand, near the margin of the forest.

There were three boats lying in the water, and as I was desirous to get the people near me during my visit to them, in order that I might observe their habits of life, my purpose of remaining for some time among them was explained to them, and they were promised rice if they would accompany me back to my vessel in their boats. They willingly agreed to do so, and we soon started, I leading the way in my dug-out. As we approached our destination, we sighted a large Burmese boat in full sail, with two Selung boats in tow, and on hailing them we learned that the former contained a Chinese trader come to barter, and who had fallen in with these Selung boats, and that he was going into Elphinstone Bay to carry on his operations. As this exactly suited my arrangements, our anchor was soon up, and we followed him. We all took up the same position, and on my explaining my wishes to the Chinaman, who was from Mergui, and spoke Burmese, he agreed to go and bring in as many Selung boats as he could find, an arrangement which fell in with the object of his visit as well as mine.

Close to where my vessel lay there was a sandy beach, or rather a high-lying bank of sand, on which there were the huts of a Selung encampment of the previous year, consisting of a number of small rickety huts perched on bamboo stakes about seven feet high.

No sooner had we taken up our position than I was earnestly asked for the rice I had promised, as they had none, and I was told that the children were, to use their own words, calling out with hunger. How far this was true, of course I have no means of knowing; but rice they had not, and this article of diet is the only vegetable substance, beyond a few wild roots and fruits, which they can command. They depend for their supplies chiefly on the traders from the mainland who visit them, and on an occasional visit to Mergui or some other coast village. They are, however, improvident, and their supplies not unfrequently run short. The rice was no sooner given than it was cooked and eaten with great professions of thankfulness, especially on behalf of the children.

On the western shore of the bay, three trees were pointed out to me as the residence of a *nât* or spirit of the forest, dreaded by the Selungs, and I learned that an annual festival, at which this *nât* was propitiated, was to take place in a few days, when all the boats of the Doang Selungs would assemble in the bay. I

was therefore most fortunate in the time of my visit to this people.

I went ashore and visited the spot, and under the grove found a small hut in which the *nât* is supposed to take up its residence during the festival, but as it had been standing uncared for since last year, it was in rather a ruined state. It was a simple bamboo structure, 9 feet long by 5 feet broad and 5 to 6 feet high, a copy in miniature of a Burmese hut, with a low platform or kind of verandah in front. The only attempt at ornamentation consisted of the corner posts being carried up a short distance above the walls, their tapered ends being rudely carved with a diagonal pattern. Removed about fifty feet from it stood a strong pole about twenty feet in height with a dilated top, some distance below which were four cross-arms in two pairs, placed at right angles to one another. About twelve feet off from the pole there were three other posts, but only six feet high and at intervals of six feet in a straight line, and each of these also terminated in a dilated end. Some little distance away from them there were the remains of a fireplace made of three stones, the cooking-place for the offerings to the *nât*.

In a few days thirty-eight Selung boats had arrived, and I was informed that the appeasing of the *nât* would take place whenever the headman had restored the hut and made all the necessary arrangements. The number of the boats was also augmented by the arrival of another Chinese trader.

On the morning of the 8th of March, I received a message from Hama, the headman, that the festival would take place that day, and soon afterwards my presence was requested. I at once complied, and found him waiting for me with two or three Selungs, and no sooner had I put foot on shore, than off he marched, preceded by an old man carrying a pole on which a piece of white cloth was tied as a flag, I following in the rear. We went direct to the grove, where I found the entire boat population assembled, seated on the ground in front of the hut which had had a new roof put on it, small areca-nut palms tied to the posts, and white flags flying from the tall pole and its arms. I was invited to go into the house and sit down, but I declined to usurp the position of the *nât*, and contented myself with waiting in the verandah until a chair had been brought for me from my vessel, when I seated myself by the side of the hut in the shade of the grove of trees. Everything being now ready, an old man and

woman squatted down in the verandah, and on inquiring who they were, I was told that they had been for some time in bad health, and that it was the custom for sick people to make offerings to the *nât* for their recovery. A small party of men now advanced and laid down in the verandah the offerings to the *nât*, consisting of *pawn-soopari* and *chunâm* and a vessel holding coloured water with a leafy twig in it. To these were immediately added a small wild pig and some fine wax; but the mouse-deer, *Tragulus kanchil*, a thoroughly sylvan animal, sometimes takes the place of the wild pig, being thus also an appropriate offering to the spirit of the woods. The next offerings deposited for the use of the *nât* were of an entirely different nature, and consisted of liberal supplies of liquor, which it was strange to observe fell to the province of the women to offer.

The wife of the owner of each boat approached and set down a bottle of *samshu*, and then lit a small wax taper, which she placed in front of the verandah; a part of the ceremony which is probably borrowed from the Buddhists. About half a dozen of the elders now seated themselves in front of the offerings, and one, acting as the spokesman, addressed, to my astonishment, not the *nât* only, as I had expected, but a being whom they call *Theedah*. In this he was stolidly joined by the old man and woman, but he became excited and threw his arms about, as he was recognised as one who had the power to invoke *Theedah*, and the *nât* who is hopelessly mixed up with him. I was informed that he was asking *Theedah* to keep away all sickness, fever, small-pox, and cholera, and to give them plenty of *bêche-de-mer*, *Kao* fish, honey, wax, and *akyaw*. But a kind of threat was held out to the Being, as he was told that they could make only one offering a year, and that, as they now gave him all the *samshu* they possessed,—which was not strictly correct, because, as the festival proceeded, they sent for much more from its fountain-head, the Chinese boats,—he would receive no more until next year, implying that if he did not behave handsomely to them in the interval, his supplies for next year might be stopped. Besides joining in this part of the ceremony, the sick couple offered up a request of their own to *Theedah* in the following words:—“*Katoice ehbap annanee maket thee-how bolahigh maon elap prang*,” which, being interpreted word for word, reads thus:—“*Nât*, father or grandfather, help sickness to-morrow cured, give liquor bottle.”

These addresses being ended, the *samshu*, consisting of thirty-eight bottles, *i.e.*, a bottle to each boat, was distributed among the men ; but a stone jar stood by as a store in reserve.

One of the bottles of *samshu* was opened with great deliberation by Hama, the headman, and was repeatedly applied to each nostril before he poured out any, the smell of the liquor being evidently sniffed with great gusto. He then drank off a potion, and handing the bottle to two or three others, it was emptied, and others were drawn and handed to the seated people, till all had tasted, or rather had drank. As the liquor passed round, the people began to be lively, and the man who had addressed *Theedah* rose and performed a dance, throwing his arms about in a wild fashion. While this was going on the men went about coaxing the women and girls to drink, who, however, I was glad to observe, were more moderate in their draughts than the men, and trying to prevail on them to dance, till at last some girls consented to do so, and went off to don their Malay skirts.

The liquor soon began to take effect, and as the excitement and noise increased, I left them and went to my boat without waiting for the return of the girls. As the day progressed, nearly the entire Selung population, with the exception of the young people and a few women, were more or less intoxicated, their exhausted stores having been freely replenished at the floating and unlicensed tap-houses of the rascally Chinamen ; women and children being the messengers.

This orgie marks the close of the winter-harvest of the sea, but it could not have been possible had there been no traders present ready to take advantage of the failing of these simple and at other times sober people. After this debauch the fleecing of the Selungs begins by the disreputable Chinese.

In a conversation I had with Hama some days after the festival regarding the being *Theedah* whom they addressed, he told me that his parents had informed him that a missionary was settled on Elphinstone Island when he was a very young boy (his age now being probably forty-five years), and that before the missionary's arrival the Selungs knew nothing about *Theedah*, and feared only the *ndits*. This, as has been seen, is verified by the testimony of Mr. Kincaid, the first missionary to these people, who says of them they had "no God, no temple, no priest, no liturgy, no holy day, and no prayers." Dr. Stevens, whose knowledge of the Selungs was gained subsequent to Mr. Kincaid's,

has nevertheless stated that these sea-gypsies "have a traditional belief in the existence of a God whom they call *Too-da*, whom they regard as the greatest and best of beings, who created all things in heaven and on earth;" and that they have also "a distinct tradition of the Flood, after which they say God came down from heaven and assigned to the different nations and tribes their habitations and employments."¹ All these supposed traditions are probably survivals of the teachings of the missionary who is said to have had a settlement on the shores of the bay on which the festival was held. While there, he had encouraged the Selungs to settle on the island, and Hama's father had an orchard of dorian trees and areca-nut palms; but all trace of this is long since gone. These efforts, made about half a century ago, to ameliorate the condition of the Selungs, were seemingly entirely due to the liberality and philanthropy of Major Broadfoot, whose encouragement and sympathy also stimulated the missionaries to prepare a small primer of the Selung language.² For some reason or other which I have failed to ascertain, the schools were closed, the missionary labours were abandoned, and these sea-gypsies were left to themselves. They therefore soon relapsed to their original heathen ways, and all that now remains to indicate they were once the subjects of Christian teaching is their dim idea of a deity exemplified in their fear—I shall not say worship—of *Theedah*.

As remarked by Helfer, the true home of a Selung is his boat. It is made of the trunk of a tree, scooped out, and trimmed externally in graceful lines to the required form, the prow and stern each ending in a vertical portion of no great transverse thickness, and into which a large semicircular notch is cut, which serves as a step by which the children are enabled to climb out of and into the boat when it is lying on the beach, whilst the men use the notch also as a step when they enter a boat from the water. In the stern the portion below the notch is more bevelled off than at the prow, where it projects forwards as a cutwater. A series of ribs are fitted on to the inside of the boat, and made long enough to project upwards about a foot beyond the sides. A number of superimposed layers of the stem of a palm known to the Burmese as *yen-gan* are adjusted in longitudinal series on the outsides and

¹ British Burma Gazetteer, vol. i. p. 190.

² A copy of this work, entitled, "Selung Language Primer," Maulmein, 1846, exists in the Library of the India Office.

insides of the projecting portions of the ribs, and are secured to them by ratan cords. The bulwarks so formed are then firmly bound down to the margins of the dug-out portion, and this is accomplished by their being tied on to a longitudinal bar of wood secured to the insides of the ribs. The bulwarks are made water-tight by being filled up with the substance known to the Selungs as *pwai-nyet*, described farther on.

A seat is constructed for the steersman, and the outer two-thirds of the boat are decked with a platform of split bamboos. A number of vertical pieces of wood project upwards from the bulwarks for the support of the sides of the only covering the Selungs have to their boats, and which consists of a rude mat made of the leaves of a *Pandanus*, stretched across a framework consisting of two erect forked pieces of wood about three feet high fastened to each end of the deck in the middle line, and on which rests a long bamboo pole. The covering is thus easily removable, and it is only made use of, as a rule, when the boats are at rest. The small fireplace consists of a bed of sand enclosed in a shallow wooden framework, and occupies one part of the deck. The oblong sail is also made of *Pandanus* leaf, first heated over a fire to soften it, and then rolled round a stick to flatten it; the leaves being fixed together in successive strips with the fibre of a ratan. A few mats, some rude cooking utensils, shell spoons (Plate iv. fig. 7), bamboos for holding fresh water, and spears for fish and pig complete the furnishings of a boat.

Among the Elphinstone Island Selungs there were two men who had established a reputation for skill in boat-building, and one of them constructed a model for me, now in the Calcutta Museum, nine feet in length, in seven days, an ordinary boat measuring from 20 to 25 feet in length. In constructing this model, the man, with his wife, betook himself to a secluded part of the bay, where he could work without fear of interruption, and I there visited him, and found his only tools to be an adze and chisel; a foot-rule being unknown to him. With these simple appliances he produced a boat of admirable proportions, and complete in all its details, even to the fireplace, with the exception of fish and hog spears. The only parts he did not make himself were the split bamboo deck, the shelter mat and mat for the sail; his charge for the whole being six rupees. A full-sized boat can be purchased for about thirty mats of the finer sort.

I was informed that one Selung in the Doang group could work

in iron and make spear-heads, but that they generally obtained all their iron-work from Mergui.

One of the chief occupations of the Selungs during the cold weather is the capture of the huge devil-fish or eagle ray, *Dicerobatis eregoodoo*, and which is known to them as the *Ka'oo*. They allege that this formidable fish sometimes attains to 20 feet in breadth; and to impress me with its great size, they said that a man seated at the head of such a fish could not be seen by a man similarly seated at the tail; and it is quite possible that it may grow to the dimensions they say it reaches, as the late Sir Walter Elliot has recorded a specimen 15 feet broad. Its capture is attended with considerable trouble, and even danger, as a large fish may even capsize a boat; and the Selungs believe that it occasionally seizes and swallows men when they accidentally fall into the water, which they sometimes do while in the act of harpooning it, and I was informed that two of their number had lost their lives in this way. The harpoon is a heavy weapon, and its iron head (Plate iv. fig. 3) is let into the end of a long bamboo, and is fastened to it by a rope coiled round the end of the shaft, another and longer rope being made fast to the shaft and to the boat. When a fish has been secured, it is dragged on to the shore, skinned, and cut up into narrow strips about six feet in length, the skin and the intestines being treated in the same manner. The pieces are afterwards laid out on the rocks to dry in the sun, and when they reach Mergui they are exported under the name of *black-fish* to other Burmese ports and to Penang. Besides this ray, they spear other fish, and use for this purpose the two other forms of spears (Plate iv. figs. 4 and 5). Rays seem to abound in some parts of the Archipelago, and, in a small bay in Owen Island, I observed great numbers leaping out of the water to a considerable height, revolving as they fell and alighting generally on their backs, their white under surfaces glancing in the sun.

Perhaps next to *ka'oo*-harpooning the collecting of *bêche-de-mer* is the most important industry. It is carried on more or less throughout the entire year, chiefly at the time of spring tides, as few of the holothurians used are to be found at the lowest level of ordinary tides. Two kinds of *bêche-de-mer* are known to the Selungs, *viz.*, a white, and a black; but the very large black holothurian, widely distributed, and very plentiful on the beach in some localities, even at the low-water level of ordinary

tides, is despised by the Selungs, who assert it to be poisonous. A considerable quantity of *bêche-de-mer* is annually produced in the islands, the mode of preparing it being very simple. When the holothurians have been collected in sufficient numbers to fill a large iron pot, they are boiled over a wood-fire, no water being added, as the fluid they throw out suffices to boil them. After this has been done to the requisite degree, they are taken and spread out on a bamboo platform raised some distance above and over a fire, where they dry and become hard.

Another important industry of the Selungs is the collecting of the large mollusc *Turbo marmoratus*, which is chiefly procured by them in the most westerly islands of the Archipelago. They extract the animals by means of a small piece of iron, and they are then boiled, and afterwards dried in the sun, when they are known as *thadee*. By this process they become hard and black, having the uninviting appearance of huge dried snails. In one year a single boat will collect as many as 8000 specimens of this mollusc, and a trader, the year previous to my visit, carried away about 700 lbs. weight of *thadee* to Mergui, whence it is exported to Penang for Chinese consumption. A *viss* at Mergui is valued at about 14 to 16 rupees. The empty shells are also taken to the same port, where 1000 fetch from 125 to 150 Rs. They are used for making the fine lime *chundam* used in *pawn-eating*.

The Selungs also collect the large mother-of-pearl oyster, *Ostrea sinensis*, which occurs around Elphinstone Island and in many other parts of the Archipelago; but as it is not systematically collected, I have no means of knowing whether it is numerically abundant. A large shell—and some are said to attain to 18 inches in diameter—brings as much as Rs. 10 at Mergui, but ordinary-sized specimens are sold there at one and a half to Rs. 2. The merchants at Mergui, in their turn, export them to Moulmein and Rangoon, whence they are sent chiefly to Mandalay, to be used for inlaid work.

The value of the true pearl-oyster, *Avicula (Meleagrina) margaritifera*, which appears to be distributed throughout the Archipelago, is well known to the Selungs, who, when they find the shells, invariably break up the animal with the fingers in search of pearls, which they dispose of in barter at Mergui. I was unable, however, to ascertain whether many pearls are found, as they invariably pass into the hands of the Chinese traders,

who would afford me no information on the subject; but I got a few as a sample from one man, which have been favourably reported on to me by an expert. A well-known bank of this oyster occurs at the south end of Sullivan Island, but nothing is known regarding its extent or its richness in shells.

Another product of the sea is the long whip-like *Antipathes*, which grows to a great length, and yields the so-called black coral of commerce. It is not at all uncommon in some localities, and is obtained by the Selungs with comparative ease, as the tips of its long stems become visible at the lowest tides, when they procure it by diving. It is made up into bundles containing a hundred stems, and a boat will sometimes carry many bundles to Mergui in one year from the Elphinstone group of islands. They are bartered at that port for cloth and food, and are sent to other Burmese ports to be cut down into beads for Buddhist rosaries, known as *kyouk ney padee*, or black stone beads. Ten bundles yield about Rs. 25 at Mergui.

The women occasionally occupy a portion of their time in collecting a marine worm or *Gephyrean* (*Phymosoma japonicum*, Grube), found in muddy and sandy banks at low water, using with great dexterity a sharp-pointed piece of wood which they force into the mud and sand close to the hole tenanted by the worm, and which by practice they at once distinguish from the burrow of any other marine animal. By a rapid movement of the wrist the animal is almost invariably brought at once to the surface. These unsavoury-looking objects are boiled and eaten.

The turtle, *Chelone mydas*, is not unfrequently caught by the Selungs, but during the ten days I spent among them in Elphinstone Island, I saw no evidences substantiating Helfer's statement that turtle "is their main food." It is probable that Helfer did not distinguish between *Chelone mydas* and *C. imbricata* when speaking of the food of the Selungs; but as the latter is collected for its shell, and its flesh is edible, it is doubtless eaten, but I did not observe any with the Selungs at Elphinstone Island Bay. The encampment which Helfer visited may, on the other hand, have been in a locality where turtles were common. A boat will obtain in one season from five to six *viss* of tortoise-shell, which is bartered at the rate of six rupees a *viss* for large plates, and two rupees for plates of a smaller size.¹

¹ Lieutenant Burn, in his letter to the Commissioner, states that in 1858 large plates of tortoise-shell yielded 16 rupees *per viss*, and small plates 6 rupees.

During the months of March, April, and May, the Selungs are engaged in collecting the honey and wax of *Apis dorsata*. When a man finds a hive not quite ready to be removed, he marks the spot by bending down some branches of the shrubs at the base of the tree, and another honey-hunter seeing this, will not touch the hive. They have a special bucket (Pl. iv. fig. 1) made of very light wood for lowering the hive to the ground. There are four vertical ribs at equal distance from each other with a hole in each, through which a ratan rope is passed, and by which the bucket and its contents are lowered. A trader the year previous to my visit carried away a large quantity of honey and wax, but the amount he mentioned to me I cannot but think was an exaggeration. Mr. J. Lee, in his report¹ on the produce of the Archipelago, states that honey and beeswax are not plentiful, and that the total amount collected in the southern islands annually does not exceed fifty *viss* of each; but in the northern islands, such as the Elphinstone group, a much larger quantity is found.

A half-caste Chinese merchant at Mergui, by a Chinese father and Burmese mother, and named Moungh Shuay Ee, showed me a large mass of a substance he called *pwai-ngyet*, and which he obtained from the Selungs, and similar to what I had seen at Yimiki. It was lying in the verandah of his house, and was alive with a multitude of a small species of bee with transverse white bars on its abdomen. Some were passing in and out of holes and passages in the mass, while others were coming and going much in the same way as honey-bees do from a hive. He told me the Selungs sometimes obtained as much as 300 or 400 *viss* of this substance in one year; but this is probably an exaggeration, as in the Chief Commissioner's Resolution on the Forest Administration for 1876-77,² it is stated that only 50 or 60 *viss* of *pwai-ngyet* is collected annually. I am not aware, however, whether any means are taken to ascertain how much is brought direct by the Selungs to the Chinese merchants. At Shuay Ee's house, the back of which had a platform towards the sea, like the majority of houses on the beach at Mergui, Selung boats could arrive and depart without being noticed from the streets of the town; and I am disposed to think that much of this product is brought into Mergui

¹ Progress Report of the Forest Administration in British Burma for 1876-77, Pt. A., p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

in this way. This substance is the result of the labours of a stingless bee of the genus *Trigona*, and is in reality its nest.¹

When I was at Sullivan Island or Lampi, in the month of January, I one day met a boat manned exclusively by Malays, and on asking them what had brought them to the island, they replied that they had come to collect wood-aloes or eagle-wood,²

¹ In April 1857, Sir Archibald Bogle, Commissioner of the Tenasserim Provinces, forwarded from Moulmein to the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India at Calcutta a sample of this substance, which he stated had only to be moistened with earth-oil till of the consistence of paint, and then spread with the fingers on a bit of cloth on the cracks of the roof of a house, to make it quite waterproof. The Society, in order to obtain information regarding the true nature of this substance which Sir Archibald stated was known as *Pwai-nyet*, consulted the Rev. C. S. Parish, then resident in the Tenasserim Provinces, and he reported to the Society that *Pwai-nyet* was commonly procurable in the Moulmein bazaar at about one anna a pound, and that it was the result of the labours of a small bee which made its nest of the substance, and that it was soft, plastic, and extremely glutinous, but that it became hard and brittle on exposure to the air. When bought, it is commonly in a large irregularly-shaped lump, rudely honeycombed, and mixed with much extraneous matter. It is soluble apparently in any (vegetable) oil. It is a well-known and commonly used substance, but, though frequently noticed, mistakes as to its true nature have often been made, chiefly owing to the fact that the name of *dammer* has been given to it in the bazaar by the natives of India. It is not *dammer*, though if *dammer* is asked for in the bazaar, *Pwai-nyet* is the substance generally offered for sale. It is used for caulking generally, mixed with wood-oil over a fire, and it answers its purpose admirably in the case of woodwork.

The nest of this bee is made indifferently in hollow trees, in old woodwork, in a hole in the ground, or in crevices in rocks. Mr. Parish says that *Pwai-nyet* is composed mainly of the resinous exudation of *Hopea odorata* and different species of *Dipterocarpi* worked up by the bee. (Consult Journal of the Agri. and Hort. Soc. of India, vol. x., 1857; Balfour's Cyclopædia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia, vol. iii. 3rd ed., articles *Trigona* and *Pwai-nyet*; Mason's Burma, 1860, p. 350; and Theobald's edition of the same work, 1882, vol. i. p. 121. For a description of *Trigona levicaps*, possibly the species found in the Tenasserim Provinces and in the Mergui Archipelago, see Journal of the Proceedings of the Linnean Society, vol. ii., Zool., 1858, p. 51, where eight other species are described; and for a description of the nest, and figure of its trumpet-shaped entrance, see Parish in "Science Gossip" for 1866, p. 198.)

² I am indebted to Mr. C. B. Clarke for the following note on the source of this substance. He says: "The whole learning of Eagle-Wood or Aloe-Wood is in Watt's 'Dict. Products of India,' pp. 279-281, and (in brief) in Kew Gardens Report for 1878, p. 36. The substance of these is that true Eagle-Wood is the product of one or more species of *Aquilaria*, while *Aloexylon* remains an insoluble problem.

"I have compared Loureiro's *Aloexylon* (and the figure of Rumphius he cites) with the material of *Aquilaria* in this (Kew) herbarium. Loureiro has flowers and fruit which he describes, and which I think must belong to some Legu-

which they obtained from the Selungs, and also found for themselves in the forest by cutting down the trees that yield it. On inquiring whether they had met with much success, I received an evasive answer, but at the same time they offered to sell me a few pieces, which I bought; but as the price I gave is no indication of its real value, it is unnecessary to mention it here.

The quantity of eagle-wood collected both by Malays and Selungs in former years was considerable, but now that the trees are becoming more and more scarce, the Malays engaged in this industry visit the islands less frequently and in fewer numbers. Mr. Lee states that in 1876-77, about 8000 trees were being annually cut down for the purpose of obtaining this substance, which he mentions was the only forest produce of value and importance in these islands. I am disposed to think that this statement about 8000 trees being annually destroyed may probably have arisen from some error in the calculation, as the number stated would give a daily average of twenty-one *akyaw* trees, a quantity which seems impossible when the size of the tree and sparseness of the population are considered, and it is well known that there has not been any perceptible falling off in the number of the inhabitants during the last fifty years. Moreover, the minose tree; but he does not seem at all certain that the wood '*Agallocha*' belongs to the flower and fruit. I think there is every probability that the wood described in Loureiro was true *Aquilaria* Eagle-Wood; that the flower and fruit were some Leguminosæ, and that the leaves were *eüher* or *both*.

"There are four well-marked species of *Aquilaria* in the Kew herbarium, differing distinctly in their fruit, viz. :—

"1. *Aquilaria Agallocha*, the 'northern' species, growing in Sylhet, North Siam, North-East Burma.

"2. The southern form *Malaccensis*.

"3. An undescribed species, got by Pierre in Cochin-China.

"4. The large-flowered Chinese species.

"Whatever theory is accepted about *Alseodaphne*, the name ought to be dropped, for uncertainty and imperfection of description."

The substance known as eagle-wood occurs as irregularly-shaped masses, their greatest lengths being generally in the direction of the grain of the wood. They are hard brownish-yellow splinters, more or less mottled with black, and infiltrated with resin. Not unfrequently they are hollowed out, the excavated portions being covered with a fine layer of a brown earthy substance, and in such cases this appears to be due to the ravages of white ants. Indeed, the pieces of eagle-wood in my possession vividly recall to me the form and general appearance which I have observed in the trunks of teak and other tropical trees when they have been attacked by white ants and afterwards by decay in the parts injured.

Eagle-wood is found, however, in all parts of the trunk, and most frequently in the alburnum.

islands themselves do not offer any evidence of its truth, as the forest as a whole seems scarcely touched by man, its great enemy in the northern islands being the devastating cyclone, which, however, is a rare visitant. There is no doubt the *akyaw* trees are recklessly destroyed, but the destruction is a very long way within Mr. Lee's figures.

The Selungs seem to devote themselves to the collection of eagle-wood towards the end of the north-east monsoon and before the south-west monsoon fully sets in, and chiefly at the time of neap-tides, because at these times few holothurians are obtainable.

Mr. Lee states that 1000 *viss* of eagle-wood used to be collected in the Archipelago about fifteen years ago, yielding from Rs. 5 to Rs. 22 per *viss*, according to the quality, and adds, "It need scarcely be stated that the Selungs are not paid probably one-fifth of these prices. A few loongyees, some remnants of cloth, a little paddy, a small quantity of tobacco, and perhaps the smell of opium now and then, is about all they get for the *Akyaw* collected." But by 1881-82 the price had risen to Rs. 50 per *viss* for the best quality of this substance. From Mergui it is exported to Penang for the Chinese market, and also to Moulmein and Rangoon.

The tree is known to occur in Tavoy Island to the north, and in St. Matthew's Island to the south, and it will probably be found in every island of any size intervening between these points. The Burmese name is *Akyaw*, the Selung *Tsanah*, the Malay *Gaharoo*, the Siamese *Krisáná*, and the Chinese *Ngacha*.

Another and valuable substance found in the Archipelago is the edible nests of *Collocalia spodiopygia*. The Selungs, however, as far as I could learn, do not collect the nests systematically, but as they know their value, they always secure any when they are easily accessible, and use them for barter. The Malays appear to be the chief collectors of these objects, and visit the outer islands and others near the mainland, such as Elephant Island, described by Commander Carpenter,¹ confining their operations to the north-east monsoon, when the sea is calm. I have failed to obtain any information regarding the quantities procured by the Selungs.

The wild hog, so abundantly distributed throughout the islands, is hunted by the Selungs, who follow it up with their dogs, and kill it with their spears (Pl. iv. fig. 6.) The hunting is said to be

¹ *Nature*, 9th July, 1888.

confined to the rainy season, the reason assigned for this being that the dogs fail to follow the scent in the dry weather. The fat of the wild hog is saved by the Selungs, and offered for barter to the traders.

Several dogs are generally found in every boat, and Mr. Menzies says that the Selungs seldom lose an opportunity of adding to their number; and that, as the common village dog of the mainland is seldom an adept at, or inclined to receive instruction in hunting, he is subjected to very severe training. "Fresh from the streets of Mergui or other coast-town or village, he is deposited by his new master on the first convenient uninhabited island presenting itself. He either dies of starvation, if too indolent to hunt for his subsistence, or soon learns to catch his prey. In a couple of months he is sought for, and if found alive, is reclaimed and taken home." It seemed to me that the dogs of the Selungs led a very miserable life, emaciated from want of food, and buffeted on every side; and of the latter treatment I had ample aural evidence in Elphinstone Island Bay, where I was in the midst of a large canine population. When the boats are left stranded by the receding tide, as represented on Plate iii., the dogs wander ashore, and when this happens at night, they not unfrequently fall a prey to crocodiles (*C. porosus*), and an instance of this occurred one evening when my vessel lay in Elphinstone Island Bay, the piteous howls of the animal arousing the whole community, human and canine.

On their boats and in their encampments on shore, the women chiefly occupy their spare time in making mats from the leaves of a species of *Pandanus*,¹ which is very common in the Archipelago. The leaf is torn up into strips varying with its length, which is sometimes as much as nine feet in extent. These are again subdivided into ribbons about a quarter of an inch in breadth, and when a considerable number have been prepared, they are boiled for some hours in earthen pots, and afterwards soaked in fresh water, and subsequently dried in the sun. By this treatment they become soft and pliable, and assume a straw colour.

These long ribbons are very dexterously plaited into mats of different sizes, the largest measuring about 8 feet 6 inches in length, by 2 feet 6 inches in breadth. A simple striped

¹ Mr. Menzies was under the impression that the species in question does not occur on the mainland.

pattern is produced by the introduction of a strand of broader ribbons than those forming the mass of the mat, and a further effort at ornamentation is attempted by leaving out little square holes in three parallel series at equal distances from one another near the ends. A mat of the foregoing dimensions can be run up into a roll about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, and weighing only 1 lb. 14 oz. The softness and lightness of these mats, and the cool surface they present, render them a favourite substance for sleeping upon, and they have consequently a large sale on the mainland, and are even exported to Bengal and other parts. They are a very important article to the Selungs, as they use them as a circulating medium,¹ being in reality the coin or mode of payment by which they effect their purchases from each other. The women also make another mat of a much coarser quality, highly prized at Mergui and elsewhere as a waterproof covering for boats and other objects. It is also made of the leaf of the *Pandanus*, but the leaf, instead of being boiled and macerated in fresh water, is simply dried in the sun, the thorns are cut off the midrib, and the latter is split, but not broken through. The leaves are then made to overlap, and are stitched together with slips of bamboo.

Besides their simple attempts to impart some decoration to their mats, they occasionally try higher flights at art, and execute rather pretty carvings on the bamboos they use for blowing their fires,—their primitive bellows. An example of their efforts in this direction will be found at Plate iv. fig. 2 ; and it is interesting to observe that the designs are made up of representations of marine objects, chiefly various forms of star-fish, in the centres of medallions surrounded by a background of fish-scales.

The social rites of the Selungs are few and simple. When two young people have fallen in love with each other, they then ask the consent of their parents to their union ; but I was told at Yimiki that a young man in that settlement never thought of marriage until he had become possessed of a piece of cloth sufficiently large to serve as a loin-cloth for himself and his innamorata. Having thus the wherewithal with which to endow his bride, the consent of the parents followed as a matter of course ; the cloth was divided, and they became man and wife. But at Elphinstone Island I was informed that when a marriage

¹ Menzies.

was on the *tapis*, the parents of the bride and bridegroom met and interchanged *pawn-soopari*, and if the marriage was approved by both parties, it was sealed by the bridegroom presenting a piece of cloth to the parents of the bride, and a few trifles to the bride herself. As the young men generally marry before they have become possessed of a boat, the newly-married couple reside in the boat of the parents of the girl, where they remain until the birth of the first child, after which they are expected to shift for themselves.

As a rule, a Selung confines himself to one wife, but in Yimiki, and also at Elphinstone, I met with two polygamists.

A young wife in her first confinement is waited on naturally by her mother, but there are midwives among them, who are called in and give their services for a mat or two. Their obstetric methods may have the charm of simplicity, but I am afraid they are very deadly, as they restrict themselves to one plan of procedure in difficult deliveries, *viz.*, the exercising of force over the abdomen of the unfortunate expectant mother. A woman is generally at work at her household and other duties two or three days after a normal delivery.

The naming of a child is unattended with any ceremony, and the choice of a name appears to rest with the mother.

The Doang Selungs are said to suffer occasionally from fever, but no cases came under my observation during my three months' residence in the Archipelago, and, taken as a whole, they seemed a strong and healthy people. Their ranks are, however, occasionally decimated by cholera and small-pox, which they contract on their visits to Mergui and the villages of the mainland, and the number of people marked by the latter disease proved its prevalence. It appeared to me, however, a remarkable circumstance that these Doang Selungs retained the appearance of health they did, as their boats are never washed out, and are consequently littered with fragments of food that are allowed to lie and decay where they fall, emitting the most horrible stench. Before I was aware of this, I, on one occasion, hired a boat to take me a short distance, but the smell pervading it was so overwhelmingly disgusting, that I had to abandon the trip and return to my own vessel.

Many of them were disfigured by a scaly skin disease, probably due to the nature of their food, which was largely composed of fish and shell-fish, and to their frequent immersion in the sea and

subsequent exposure to the rays of a tropical sun. Ulcers also in their lower limbs were frequently seen, and their explanation of this occurrence was that they resulted from scratches received in their forest-work, and by falls on the rocks while engaged in their marine employments. At Yimiki, a miserably sickly girl, with large cicatrices on her neck, shoulder, and between her fingers, was brought to me to see if I could do anything for her. One wrist was rolled up in a dirty piece of cloth, and on removing the bandage a pitiable sight presented itself, as a great repulsive sore ran right round it. I was told that the old sores on her body had never healed until some white worms two inches long had come out of them, and that this sore would remain as it was until this also occurred. The headman stated that some of his people had died from similar sores. It seemed to me that they might possibly be due to the presence of a mematoid worm. I dressed the sore, and for this the girl expressed her gratitude very touchingly.

They have no drugs of their own, but they have the superstition that certain of their own people have the power, when one of their number falls sick, to expel the *nât* that has taken possession of the sick person. I first learned this at Yimiki, when I asked the head-man if he believed in Buddha Gaudama. He did not answer my question directly, but indirectly by saying that his father had told him that there were only *nâts*. He was then asked if he had ever seen a *nât*, to which he replied that he had not, but that a few Selungs said they had, and that these men were consulted when the *nât* had to be propitiated, as in sickness. The belief is that the evil spirit can only be expelled from the body of the person afflicted by plying one of the mediums or medicine-men with liberal potations of liquor. This he drinks, and dancing round the sick Selung, he is supposed the more he imbibes to be the more able to induce the malignant *nât* to enter into himself. There is a curious belief connected with this, mentioned by Mr. Menzies, who was informed of it by the Selung who, in 1860, was employed by Government to exercise a supervision over the Selungs generally. It was that the evil spirit made his exit from the patient through his arm, and that he assumed the form of a piece of broken glass. In this we have probably another survival, not of the teachings of the missionaries, but possibly of their having vaccinated some of the Selungs; or it may be that during the humane régime of Broadfoot and Durand that some attempt had been made in the same direction.

Mr. Menzies records, and my information coincides with his, that when any one seemed to be dying, he was taken in his boat to some uninhabited island, the boat was drawn up on the beach, a supply of food and fresh water was placed by his side, and he was then abandoned to his fate. If he recovered, he had the boat to return in; and if he died, it served as his coffin. On a small island on the east side of Elphinstone Island a boat was pointed out to me which had been used in this manner, an entire family having been seized with cholera and died after they had been abandoned on the island. There was at the time of my visit no traces of the bodies, which I was told had been dragged off and devoured either by crocodiles or lizards.

As stated by Helfer, the Selungs do not bury, but deposit their dead in the forest. But there are exceptions to this, as will presently appear. A small uninhabited island is selected, and a platform is erected about five feet from the ground and roofed over with *Pandanus* leaves. The Selungs of the Doang group make no secret where they deposit their dead, at which I was rather surprised, as I had been assured beforehand at Mergui that they did so. The position of a little island where more than one Selung had been laid out in the forest having been clearly indicated to me, I visited it. Landing on a sandy beach, I passed over a level piece of ground from which the sun's rays were excluded by the dense forest overhead, there being almost an entire absence of undergrowth. In this spot I met with one platform which had fallen down, and among the *débris* of which lay the skeleton of a man, his cooking utensils, spear, and *dáh*. A little farther on a boat was met with in which a man and wife had died of cholera, and which had been dragged up into the forest without disturbing the bodies; but a man is not laid in his boat when his wife and children survive him, as the boat is retained for them. This, however, had been some years ago, as the boat was now rotten and falling to pieces, half filled with soil, but bound together by the rootlets of the surrounding trees. The bodies had been broken up by lizards and the bones lay scattered about. *Varanus salvator* is said to be the lizard that desecrates these mortuaries of the Selungs; and a Selung told me that he had once come upon fifteen of them engaged in their revolting meal. The next platform I visited was quite entire, and on it had lain the body of a girl of about thirteen summers, but it had disappeared. Her

clothing, however, which had been placed beside her for her use, remained untouched.

In Yimiki, where the Selungs are under the influence of the Karens, they have abandoned the foregoing custom of depositing their dead on platforms, and now lay them in the ground under a few inches of earth. When the father of the headman died, the Karens introduced another innovation, as they succeeded in prevailing on him to give a feast after the burial was over.

The only Selungs who came under my observation were those found at Yimiki and the Doang group and the solitary man from Tavoy Island, as my attempts to interview those on Lampi or Sullivan Island utterly failed, although I devoted some time in trying to discover those who were said to be about the island. The time of my visit to Lampi, the month of January, was, however, the very worst month of the year on which to meet the people who frequent that island, for at that season it is almost deserted by them for the islands lying more out at sea, where they carry on their collecting of *bêche-de-mer*, &c. My remarks are therefore confined to the people found in the northern part of the Archipelago; but it was unfortunate that they were so, because it is probable that the race exists in greater purity towards the south. In connection with this, I would call attention to the physical appearance of the man standing in the centre of the group depicted in Plate i., as it will be observed that he presents a very different appearance from the others, as he is bearded, and has the features of a Mahomedan Bengal boatman, even although he professed to be a Selung. But the other men represented on this plate, and all the women, are characteristic examples of the race, a remark which is true also of those figured in Plate ii. The man dressed as a Burman in Plate i. is the headman, and he is an illustration of the great variation these people exhibit in the colour of their skins, as he was extremely black, the majority being of a paler colour, generally of a reddish-brown tint, but much darker than the generality of Malays, and practically destitute of the olive tinge which usually distinguishes the skin of that people. But notwithstanding these variations, a Malay origin suggests itself, modified possibly by intermarriage with stragglers from the very mixed population found at Mergui. In King Island and Tavoy Island, where they have settled, they appear now to marry sometimes

with Karens, and probably also with Burmese. There is, however, not the slightest foundation for Helfer's statement that some of them approach the Negro type, or that they have been in any way influenced by communication with the Andamanese, as their hair, on which he bases these suggestions, is structurally distinct from the hair of the Negro and Andamanese.

If the man of doubtful origin is left out of consideration, it may be stated that, like the Malays, they have little or no moustaches, whiskers, or beards beyond a few straggling hairs, and that their breasts and limbs are more or less destitute of hair, but not to the extent distinctive of the pure Malay type; and, moreover, the coarse hair of their heads occasionally manifests a distinct tendency to curl, which, as Wallace says, is an almost certain proof of the admixture of some foreign blood; but in this case I would again repeat that it is in no way due to Negrito influence. The form of the nose, in some, *viz.*, its depression at the bridge and expansion at the *alæ*, as seen in the two male figures on the left of Plate ii., in the women on the same side of Plate i., and in the girl to the right of Plate ii., seem also to point to an admixture of foreign blood; but the others had the nose preserving more or less its Malay type. They have the low brows, rounded foreheads, and black but slightly oblique eyes of the Malays.

In their stature they correspond to the Malays, as is proved by the accompanying table giving the height of twelve men and thirteen women. The average stature of the twelve men is 5 feet 2 inches, which corresponds to Wallace's measurements; whereas Professor Flower makes it an inch less, and some authors give 5 feet as the average height of the Malay.

MEN.			WOMEN.		
	Ft.	In.		Ft.	In.
Ee chan	5	7.25	Mapew	5	2.60
Shwe Gyo	5	5.4	Mayjaw	5	2.30
Naw thay	5	5.10	Ma toang or Ee toom	5	4
Tawpot	5	4	Mellah	5	0.50
Tweegeen	5	3.75	Mattew	5	1
Shwe Doke	5	2.25	Maleik	4	7.75
Tgee-em	5	0.50	Mayah	5	0.50
Toombow	4	11.75	Mayjoat	4	9
Assan	4	11	Ay coam	4	10.30
Dooloon	4	11.75	Meuyien	5	2.75
Akka	5	2.25	Eh meh	4	10.25
Tan-nae	5	5.50	Matgee	5	2.25
			Mama	4	10.50
	62	10.80			
Average	5	2.15	Average	65	3.79
				5	0.20

157.86 cm

152.91 cm

With considerable difficulty I succeeded in obtaining two Selung skulls, one of a man and the other of a woman. I took every precaution that the people should in no way be offended by my so doing, as they were collected unknown to any one but myself.

These skulls I submitted to Professor Sir William Turner, who has favoured me with the following notes on them :—

SELUNG SKULL (591).

“Adult ♂. Teeth much worn in the crowns and stained with betel.

“Cranium of considerable weight, with strongly marked glabella, and supraciliary ridges and mastoid processes, but the ridges in the occipital bone not especially strong. The forehead moderately retreating. The cranial vault in the parietal region somewhat roof-shaped, but without an elevated ridge in the sagittal line. The vault sloped gently backwards in the parieto-occipital region, but with no special prominence of the occipital bone. No evidence of artificial flattening in any part of the skull. In the relations of its length and breadth the skull was *mesaticephalic*, the index being 76.3, and the widest part of the cranium was near the squamous suture, though the parietal eminences were fairly marked. The basi-bregmatic height exceeded the parieto-squamous breadth, and the skull belonged to the *akrocephalic* group. There were no wormian bones in the skull, and the alisphenoid articulated freely with the parietal. The projection of the glabella caused a deep depression at the root of the nose. The nasal bones were short and narrow, and the bridge was somewhat concave upwards and forwards. The superior maxillæ sloped downwards and forwards on the alveolar region, so that the upper jaw was *prognathic*. The nasal height was twice as much as its width, and the nasal index was *mesorrhine*. The width of the orbit considerably exceeded its height, and the orbital index was *microseme*. The palato-maxillary breadth was not greatly in excess of the length, and the corresponding index was *mesuranic*. The palate was deeply arched. The lower jaw was well formed, and possessed a distinct chin. The muscular ridges and surfaces were well marked. The skull was *phænozygous*.”

SKULL from ELPHINSTONE GROUP of ISLANDS (592).

“Adult ♀. Teeth partially worn in the crowns.

“Cranium not so heavy as 591. Forehead smooth. Glabella and supraciliary ridges scarcely visible. Mastoids moderate, also occipital ridges. Forehead inclined to the vertical. Cranial vault in parietal region not so roof-shaped as in 591; parietal

eminences moderate. Cranium sloping gently downwards in parieto-occipital region, with no special prominence of occipital bone. No evidence of artificial flattening. In the relations of length and breadth the skull was *mesaticephalic*, the index being 76.6. The widest part of the cranium was just above the squamous suture. The basi-bregmatic height was 1 mm. less than the parieto-squamous breadth. The skull was *metriocephalic*, though almost up to the *akrocephalic* standard. No wormian bones, and the alisphenoid articulated freely with the parietal. No depression at the root of the nose. Nasal bones slender and almost straight. Superior maxillæ not so projecting as in 591, and the gnathic index was *mesognathous*. Nasal height was more nearly proportioned to the nasal width, and the index was *platyrhine*. The orbital width was little more than the height, and the orbital index was *megaseme*. The palato-maxillary breadth was greatly in excess of the length, and the index was *brachyuranic*. The palate was considerably arched. There was no lower jaw.

"In its internal capacity the skull was *mikrocephalic*, 1245 cubic centimetres. The skull is *cryptozygous*.

"The following are the detailed measurements of the two skulls :—

	Selung.	Elphinstone Group of Islands.		Selung.	Elphinstone Group of Islands.	
Collection number .	591	592	Collection number .	591	592	
Age	Adult	Adult	Age	Adult	Adult	
Sex	M.	F.	Sex	M.	F.	
Cubic capacity .	{ too fr- able to measure }	1245	<i>Gnathic Index</i> . .	103.8	100	
Glabello-occipital length	173	171	Interzygomatic breadth .	132	125	
Basi-bregmatic height .	136	130	Intermalar	120	116	
<i>Vertical Index</i> . . .	78.6	76	Naso-alveolar length .	69	64	
Minimum frontal dia- meter	93	94	<i>Facial Index</i>	—	—	
Stephanic	105	108	Nasal height	50	47	
Asterionic	105	116	Nasal width	25	28	
Greatest parieto-squa- mous breadth . . .	132 s	131 p	<i>Nasal Index</i>	50	59.6	
<i>Cephalic Index</i> . . .	76.3	76.6	Orbital width	40	39	
Horizontal circumference	498	482	Orbital height . . .	30	35	
Frontal longitudinal arc.	123	130	<i>Orbital Index</i>	75	89.7	
Parietal	114	121	Palato-maxillary length .	57	49	
Occipital	110	112	Palato-maxillary breadth	64	66	
Total	347	363	<i>Palato-maxillary Index</i> .	112.2	134.7	
Vertical transverse arc	292	296	Lower jaw. {	Symphysial height .	33	—
Length of foramen mag- num	35	33		Coronoid	68	—
Basi-nasal length . .	105	92		Condylod	68	—
Basi-alveolar length .	109	92		Gonio-symphysial length	91	—
				Inter-gonial width .	95	—
				Breadth of ascending ramus	40	—

"These two crania closely resembled each other in their main features as regards length, breadth and height; and in view of their being of opposite sexes there is nothing in their relative dimensions in these directions inconsistent with the view that they were a man and a woman of the same race.

"As regards the race they are probably a branch of the Malay race, though it should be stated that the Malays are by some authorities regarded as brachycephalic and not mesaticephalic. On this point, however, it would be necessary to consider how far the antero-posterior diameter of the brachycephalic Malay skull may have been diminished by artificial compression, and the cephalic index thereby brought within the brachycephalic standard. As stated in the description, these crania show no sign of artificial compression."

When the missionaries at Mergui entered on their labours among the Selungs, the language of the people was, naturally, the first subject to occupy their attention, and Durand records that the Rev. Mr. Brayton acquired some knowledge of it, and taught several of them to read in the schools that had been established through the philanthropic liberality of Major Broadfoot. The book used in the schools was a small Primer, but there is no indication in the work itself who was its author. Mr. Brayton drew up a small vocabulary of the language.

After the efforts of the missionaries for the amelioration of the condition of the Selungs were unfortunately abandoned and their schools were closed, no attempt to gain a further knowledge of their language appears to have been made until the year 1850—at least nothing is to be found in the literature accessible to me—when Mr. J. R. Logan published a small vocabulary of 132 words that had been given by Mr. O'Riley.¹

In 1880, Major Spearman² gave a vocabulary of 93 words and 7 sentences on the authority of Mr. Brayton.

During my residence among the Selungs, I drew up a vocabulary giving the numerals up to 100, and their words for one thousand and ten thousand, also their equivalents for 307 words and 30 sentences, with the names of 12 men and 13 women. I have incorporated in this vocabulary Mr. O'Riley's list of words, words given by Logan, and have reproduced the words and sentences communicated to Major Spearman by Mr. Brayton.

¹ Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia (Singapore), vol. iv. 1850, pp. 411, 412.

² Gazetteer of British Burma, vol. i. pp. 189, 190.

I submitted this list of words, &c., to General Horace N. Browne and to Dr. R. Rost for their individual opinions on its Burmese and Malay affinities.

General Browne has favoured me with the accompanying note on the Burmese aspect of the Selung language. He says:—"I have gone carefully through the Selung vocabulary, and I have not succeeded in detecting the slightest affinity between any of the ordinary words therein given and the corresponding Burmese words. Not only does there appear to be no root-affinity between the Burmese and Selung languages, but the latter tribe does not seem, so far as can be judged from the vocabulary, to have even borrowed any terms from their Burmese neighbours. This, however, is not surprising, for though the Selungs are now in contact with a Burmese-speaking population, it is only within the last century that this has been the case, as the Talaings of the Tenasserim province spoke no Burmese until that language was forced upon them by their conquerors.

"Even the Selung name for a Burman, '*Tanaho*,' has no resemblance to *Byamma*, or *Myamma*, as the Burmans call themselves.

"Both Burmese and Selung, however, denote a Shan or Siamese by what is substantially the same word, viz., '*Shan*' (Burmese), and '*Tsiam*' (Selung).

"Notwithstanding the radical difference between the Burmese and Selung languages, it is somewhat curious to find that, as regards proper names of men and women, the Selungs have borrowed largely from the Burmese.

"Among the men's names in the vocabulary, Shwe Gyo and Shwe Doke are pure Burmese, and all the others present an affinity more or less with Burmese proper names. As regards the women's names, they all commence, as in Burmese, with '*Ma*,' and the greater number of those given in the list are Burmese, more or less.

"It is possible that this may be a modern innovation, and in consequence of the Burmese conquest of Tenasserim. The Burmese head-men when, for purposes of enumeration or taxation, they took a list of the people, would naturally shirk the trouble of attempting to transcribe any strange-sounding words, and would dub each Selung with whatever Burmese name presented the most approach to the Selung appellation, and the Selungs for the sake of simplicity may have acquiesced in the new nomenclature."

Major Spearman has directed attention to the fact that the Selung word for boat is identical with the Talaing *k'bang*, a boat or vessel, and the Sulus *dapang* seems to me to be the same word. It is therefore possible that a scholar acquainted with the Talaing language might be able to detect still further examples of the Selung language having been influenced by the speech of that people, with whom they had doubtless as much intercourse before the Burmese conquest as they have now with the people of Mergui and the neighbouring coast.

I am indebted to Dr. Rost for the following note on the Malay features of the language. Dr. Rost says:—"The Selung is a distinct Malayan language, not a dialect of any of the Malayan languages. It has a number of characteristic features in morphology which distinguish it from all its sisters. It has, however, a greater resemblance to the languages of Sumatra than to other Malayan tongues."

Dr. Mason, writing in 1860, remarked that an examination of the vocabulary collected by Mr. Brayton proved conclusively that the Selung language was of the Malay family, though differing considerably from the Malay proper—an opinion which is very much the same as that arrived at by Dr. Rost.

Mr. Logan has stated that Mr. O'Riley "had noticed that the Selung language manifested strong Siamese affinities;" the former, however, believed that it had relations to other ultra-Indian, and even to Chinese languages, which, he held, showed "that it is not a mere offset of the Siamese, but probably a sister language."

The foregoing pages are a *resumé* of all that is known regarding the Selungs; and if any one conclusion more than another can be drawn from them, it is this, that the true relations of the Selungs to the Malay and other surrounding races have yet to be determined. A rich field for research thus lies close at hand to any Deputy-Commissioner of Mergui who may be stimulated by the examples of Broadfoot and Durand to take an enlightened interest in this neglected race.

The following is the vocabulary.

SELUNG VOCABULARY.¹

One, chă, chet; Malay, satu; Javanese, sa.

Two, twa; Malay, dua.

Three, tahlow; Nias Islanders and Dyaks, tǎllǎ, tǎloh; Malay, tiga; Fijian, tolu; Javanese (Ngoko), telu.

Four, păt; Kian, Punan, and Mělanô Dyaks, pat; Malay, empat; Javanese (Ngoko), pat.

Five, lemah; Malay, lima; Dyaks, lima, limoh, limuh; Fijian, lima.

Six, nam; Malay, anam; Kian Dyak, nam; Javanese (Ngoko), nemu.

Seven, loojoo; Malay, tujuh; Dyaks, tusu, tuju.

Eight, wahlow; Javanese, wolu; Îrânûn and Dûsûn, walo; Sulus, wâlû; Nias Islanders, wâtû; Fijian, walu; Malay, delapan.

Nine, chowai; Malay, sembilan.

Ten, taplaw; Malay, sepuluh.

Eleven, taplaw-chă, taplaw-chet; Malay, sa-bělas; Îrânûn, sapuloh-wisa.

Twelve, taplaw-twa.

Twenty, twaplaw; Malay, dua-puloh; Dyaks, duo-puloh.

Twenty-one, twaplaw-chă.

Thirty, tahlow-plaw; Kian and Punan Dyaks, tǎllǎ-puloh.

Forty, păt-plaw.

One hundred, allataw; Malay, sa-ratus.

One thousand, appān.

Ten thousand, a-meen.

Anger, kaing.

Anklet, k'lang.

Ant, kedām.*

Ape, la-wat.†

Arrow, p'lah; * Malay, anak-panah; Îrânûn, Dûsûn and Bûlûd-Opie, pānah.

Bamboo, kaoan, k'doon.†

Basket, bahcoee.

Bat, lawlak.

Bay, aon.

Beads, k'loiee.

Beard, booloe chaumaw.

Bêche-de-mer, gatyee.

Bee, samang.*

Belly, k'lan; * Îrânûn, Dûsûn, and Sulus, tlan.

Bird, keckyoam, sisom.*

Blood, dallak, awaen-melat; * Malay, darah.

Boat, k'bang, kebang*; Talaiing, k'bang; * Sulus, dāpang.

Bone, klan, k'lan; † Malay, tulang.

Bottle, prang; Malay, balang.

¹ An * attached to a word indicates that it is taken from the vocabulary supplied by O'Riley to Logan.

The sign † is appended to words taken from the vocabulary supplied by Mr. Brayton to Major Spearman.

The Malay words are given on the authority of Mr. W. E. Maxwell's *Manual of the Malay Language*.

The words from Malay dialects are derived from Mr. F. A. Swettenham's *Comparative Vocabulary of the Dialects of some of the Wild Tribes inhabiting the Malayan Peninsula, Borneo, &c.* Journ. Straits Branch Roy. As. Soc., June 1880, pp. 125, 160.

- Bottom*, naboo.
Boy, annan, anat kanaing.*
Boy (little), annan-nek.
Bracelet, k'lang.
Bread, k'noom.*
Brother, beei.
Buffalo, k'bao.*
Burman (a), Ta-na-ho.†
Cat, me-young, meao,* me-aw.†
Cheek, ta-bong, t'hek.*
Chest (breast), dada.
Child, annat koteet, anat,* anat † ; Malay, anak.
Chinaman, keen,† seen.†
Cloud, k'lang, k'neung.*
Cock, manok-ga-oh.
Coral, kul-lang.
Cousin, anan-beei.
Cover (of a boat), kejan.
Cow, l'mu.*
Crab, k'htom.
Crocodile, ka-yat.†
Crow, ka, ak.†
Darkness, k'man,† k'man.*
Day, alloi, alai,* alien ; † Punan Dyak, elö ; Bükütan Dyak, alāū.
Day after to-morrow, sheeshow-tyët.
Daylight, bowkaika.
Daughter, meh, anat binaing,* anat-bee-neng.†
Daughter-in-law, loah.
Dog, oiee, aai * ; Sēmang of Ulu Selama, aeh ; Malay, anjing.
Door, pai-tow † ; Malay, pintu.
Duck, adat,* addāh, ada.†
Ear, leng-ah, tengah * ; Malay, telinga.
Earth, tamak, tanak * ; Malay, tanah.
East, maloe, mata alai taok.*
Egg, k'loen.*
Elephant, gaza ; * Malay, gajah.
Eye, mā-ta, matat,* mah-tak ; † Malay, mata.
Family, a-sow.†
Father, appoang, apang,* aa-paung.†
Finger, langan, mee-nang.†
Fire, appo'i, apoi,* alam,† apoe ; † Malay, api ; Dyaks, apūi, api, apoi.
Fireplace in boat, dayappan.
Fish, ekkān, ackan,* aye-kan ; † Malay, ikan.
Flower, boangu, bungnat * ; Malay, bunga.
Foot, ka-kai, kakai ; * Malay, kaki.
Forehead, kamay-yang.
Fowl, manok, may-nauk ; † Balau-Dyak, manok ; Tagbenúa, manuk ; Sēmang of Ulu Selama, manok.
Frog, bagau.
Gecko, tawkay ; Burmese, touk-tay.
Girl, biniang.*
Girl (little), bynnai-nek.
Goat, pet.*
God, Theedah, Too-da.†
Gold, nyee, sin.*
Grandfather, ehbap.

- Grandmother*, ehboam.
Grass, lawpoat.
Gun, coopai.
Hair, boolo, bo-lot, autak ; * Irâûn, bûôh.
Hair of the head, booloe-awtak.
Hand, langan ; lan-gân ; * Malay, tangan.
Head, awtah, atak, * aw-kat ; † Punan and Bükûtan-Dyak, utok.
Head-cloth, tangay-yék.
Heaven, k'nee-on.†
Heat, kolat, kaw-lat, † kalat.*
Hen, manok-bynnai.
Hill, dalai, dlai.*
Hog, babooee, babai ; * Malay, babi ; Punan and Kian Dyaks, baboë ;
Mélano Dyak, baboi ; Bükûtan Dyak, babowi ; Tagbenûa, babuoi.
Hog-spear, pigyan.
Honey, gnaping, tsa-meng.†
Horse, ma.*
House, omâ, amak, * aw-mak ; † Malay, rumah ; Javanese, umah.
Husband, kallak, k'lak, † k'lak ; * Malay, laki.
Inside, dalam.
Island, polau ; Malay, pulau.
Knee, taot.
Knife, pait.†
Laughter, nân.
Leaf, dadn ; * Malay, daun.
Leg, k'teng, k'taing.†
Light, seng.*
Lightning, kelat ; * Malay, kilat.
Lips, bee-been.†
Liquor, elap.
Lizard, khoylek.
Lord (master), aw-paut.†
Malay, Ba-tak.†
Man, kannai, mesa, * maw-keng, † may-sha, † ma-noot.†
Man (old), eh-bap, ai-bap.†
Mast (of a boat), tayhang.
Mat, tekkan.
Milk, awaen sa-lai.*
Monkey, k'lak, klak, * k'lat.†
Moon, boolan, bulan ; * Malay, bulan.
Moon (full), boolan-poonunka.
Morning, sinira.*
Mother, annong, aenang, * aye-naung.†
Mountain, dalai addah, da-lai, † dlai.*
Mouse-deer, beetyong.
Mouth, aw-kan, awkang.*
Mud, malaw.
Nail (fingers or toes), kekoe, kekoe ; * Malay, kuku.
Nat (a spirit), katoiee, katar.
Neck, boo-loung.†
Needle, yahloam.
Night, kamman, k'man ; * Malay, malam.
Noon, nata alai tgak.*
North, taleeyang.
Nose, yoong, yong, † yong ; * Kian, Punan, and Bükûtan Dyaks, urong.
Nostrils, lay-yang-yoong.

- Oar*, poah, pwa.†
Ocean, k'toong.*
Oil, mnyat *; Malay, minyak.
Opium, gha-paidn.†
Paddy, poor.*
Plantain, pechang; Malay, pisang.
Porcupine (brush-tailed), kôh.
Prow (of boat), kawlaw.
Pwai-nyet,¹ a'oan.
Rain, kujan, kuian; * Malay, hujan.
Rat, keku; * Malay, tikus.
Rhinoceros, lawsa.
Rice, pallah, pla; * Punan, Mëlano, and Bûkûtan Dyaks, bah or baah.
Rice (boiled), tsawn.†
Ring, tityen.
River, mee-nam,† minâm.*
Road, gilan, jalan *; Malay, jalan.
Rudder, cheekoo.
Sail, liyan.
Salt, selak.*
Sand, kanai.
Sea, ta'au, tao; * *Ocean*, k'toong.
Selungs, Mawken or Manoot ta'au (*Men of the Sea*).
Serpent, aw-lan, awlan,* k'ha-nee†; Bûlûd-Opie, ulang; Malay, ular.
Shan (a), Tsiam.†
Shells, ekkichoam.
Silver, nyn, gnin,* ngeen.†
Sister, loo-ah.
Sister (elder), ao-aoi.*
Sister (young), awhee, biang.*
Sleep, nadone, nedun.*
Smell, ta'een.
Son, annan, anat,* anat-ka-neng.†
Son-in-law, nyatoiee.
Sound, n'hang.*
South, pyevah.
Spear, boo-law.†
Spear (fishing, three-pronged), choom.
Spirit, katar.*
Spoon, gya-ha-nee.
Squirrel (large black), kaprah.
Star, beetowah, bituek,* bee-took;† N. Celebes, bitûy.
Starfish, gawah.
Stern of boat, booloot-kawloang.
Stream (fresh water), ohen meenam, minam.
Stomach, lakay.
Stone, kalang, batoe.*
Sugar, naping.
Sun, ma-ta-aloeie, mata alai,* ma-ta-a-law;† Mëlano and Bûkûtan Dyaks, matalau; Malay, mata-hari.
Tadpole, emmek.
Talaing (a), Ma-aw†.
Tears, awen mǎ-ta.

¹ *Pwai-nyet* is the term applied by the Burmese to the substance of the nest of a bee belonging to the genus *Trigona*.

- Thigh*, pakah.
Thread, benang.
Thumb, metin.*
Thunder, tgun.*
Tiger, pannoo, puuk.*
Tide (full), awaen-adah.
Tide (low), awaen-nek.
Tobacco, ohbat.
To-day, alloiee ; Punan-Dyak, eloini.
Toe, takkai.
To-morrow, sheeshow, theethou, sisao,* tsee-tsoon.†
Tongue, kalāy, klek,* k'laik ; † Malay, lidah.
Tooth, laypun, lepadn ; * Îrânûn-Dyak, nîpon ; Mëlano-Dyak, nyipan.
Top, dattah.
Tree, ka-ay, ki,* k'ayo ; † Punan-Dyak, kâiû ; Mëlano-Dyak, kaiau ; Balau-Dyak, kayu ; Malay, pokok, pohon
Tub (for collecting honey), copay.
Turtle, pyn-yoiee.
Uncle, tawha.
Water, awên, awaen ; * Malay, ayer.
Wave, laman, la-mat.†
Wax, naylen ; Malay, lilin.
West, balat, mata alai namak.*
Wife, pelow, plao,* bee-noong † ; Punan-Dyak, pawoh.
Wind, anjin ; Malay, angin.
Woman, bynnai, plow,† benaing,* bee-noong † ; Malay, perempuan.
Wood, ohkang, k'ae ; * Malay, kayu.
Wood-aloës, ajaw ; Burmese, akyaw.
Worm, glang.†
Yam, kawloiee.
Year, takon.
Yesterday, booboat, boo-boot.†
- Bad*, adut*, a-doot,† a-moongha.†
Beautiful, lachee-laing, lasee-laing, amon ; * Burmese, hla-thee.
Big, addah.
Bitter, n'hai.*
Black, kehtam, ketam ; * Malay, hitam.
Blue, ohmong, ketam.*
Broad, lagat.*
Cold, diyam, dayam ; * Mëlano-Dyak, dadam.
Crooked, lai-kouk.†
Dead, matai* ; Malay, mati ; Îrânûn, Dûsûn and Bûlûd Ôpei, matei.
Deep, dalam.
Dirty, kaleeyet.
Enough, choup-ka.
False, tawkaw-ha.
Fat, batong.
Female, bynnai.
Few, abbeet, abit.*
Good, amon,* a-moong.†
Green, metah.
Heavy, ba-at.
High, latah, datu*.
Hot, kolat, kalat.*
Hot (very), kolat-laing.

Hungry, kalan, k'lan.*
Large, adat.*
Lean, gneppay.
Light, bahow.
Long, adat.*
Male, ga'oh.
Middle, kanga.
Old, maulah or potau, patao.*
Outside, peetaw.
Painful, maket.
Pleasant, makkow.
Plenty, lalbat-laing.
Pretty, lachee or lasee ; Burmese, hla-thee.
Rapid, wai-wai,* sat-sat.*
Red, mehlak, melat ; * Malay, merah.
Rough, palloon.
Round, kloam.
Shallow, kattay.
Short, abit,* balui.*
Sick, makit.*
Slow, kokoe, kruakru.*
Small, nĕk, nek.*
Small (very), nĕk-nĕk.
Smooth, laykyn.
Sour, masam ; * Malay, masam.
Square, palaycau.
Straight, la-koot.†
Strong, kalang.
Thick, tabang.
True, tawkaw, pakat.*
Ugly, lachee ha, amonhat.*
Untrue, tawkaw-ha.
Wet, pŭk.
White, potayak, patuik ; * Malay, puteh.
Fellow, ina-mang.*

He, awlang.
I, t'chee, kyi.*
It, awlang.*
She, awlang.*
This, ini.*
What, sipan.*
Who, asao.*
Ye, kanye.*
Your, kanye.*

Able (to be, can), tsyang.*
Answer (to), m'yai.
Bark (to), naybow.
Be (is to), nek.†
Believe (to), gnawchet.
Bend (to), babaom.
Boil (to), lebow.
Born (to be), labong.
Burn (to), kalat.*
Call (to), mahoang.

- Carry (to)*, bah, bak.†
Cold, diam.
Come (to), ngadin, gnadin, * nga-dien.†
Cook (to), dotyon.
Cough (to), mawah.
Cry (to), mangai.
Dance (to), mayyah.
Deceive (to), k'wa-o.†
Desire (to lack), lat.†
Die (to), mattaiee, ma-too.†
Dream (to), neppoiee.
Drink (to), ma-am, ma-am,† ma'am *; Malay, minum.
Eat (to), makān, makan, * nyam;† Malay, makan.
Empty (to), angang.
Fill (to), panoo; Malay, penoh-kan.
Find (to), boneyamow.
Fish (to), maon ehkan.
Gather (to), tahpoong.
Go (to), lakow, lakai; * ta-la-ho† (lakoon)†; Mōlano-Dyak, lakau.
Hear (to), mengah, neung.*
Jump (to), lawput; Malay, lompat.
Kill (to), mepang*, nai-moung.†
Laugh (to), mawah, mawak.*
Lose (to), ngaetka.
Look (to), naleat.
Love (to), talow, lit.†
Make (to), na-baut;† Malay, membuat.
Make straight (to), bollojoot.
Marry (to), mattain.
Mix (to), addook.
Murder (to), m'eppong.
Pass (to), longoo.
Rejoice (to), nokattai.
Remember (to), manaik.
Repeat (to), meahjoy.
Return (to), unbellay; Malay, kambali.
Rise up (to), mangon.
See (to), malleat, pa-nak.†
Shoot (to), menging.
Sing (to), gineh, gee-nai.†
Sink (to), nangoong.
Sit (to), nałök; Malay, duduk.
Sleep (to), nehoden, nadone.
Smell (to), metyoam.
Sorry (to be), kollat-dallai.
Speak (to), tahow, miyar, * ma-kaho.†
Spear (to), makehkan.
Steal (to), malak, nga-lat.†
Suck (to), mam.
Swim (to), mangoiee.
Think (to), manik-katai.
Thirsty (to be), kang awēn.
Thunder (to), tagoon, tgun.*
Try (to), sangbao.
Understand (to), me eai.
Walk (to), la-kow ed-duop, la-kow.†

Want (to), men.
Weigh (to), mechchang.
Wish (to), lat.†
Worship (to), nya-ma.†

*No, ha, ka.**
Here, iddee, idi, ini.**
How long? toom, tom.†
How much? toom, tom.†
Near, daunee.
Now, k'dee-an.†
Quick, wai-loo-lee.†
Quickly, wai-wai.
Soon, wai-wai.
Where, beetam, bee-tam.†
Yes, eh or tawkaw.

Are turtle eggs good to eat? boonigh ngakkan amon ka?
Bring a light, appo'i-bahidee.
Bring water, awēn bahidee.
Carry this basket, bahcoee makkān.
Come here, ngadiu iddee.
Don't be afraid, nyn nakoat.
Do you eat the nut of the betel-palm? tennang cope makan ka?
Do you grow paddy? beeaing pie nanam ka?
Far away, la nyōt.
Give me some water, awēn onkee.
Go away, lakow.
How many children have you? annat toom deloiee?
How many dogs have you? beeaing oiee toom berlat?
How much do you want, going and returning? beeaing lacow edoop
akkakaw maou toom?
How old are you? gnyawa toom takon?
I am going to sleep, kyi or t'chee nadone ka.
I am hungry, kyi or t'chee kalan.
I am not afraid, t'chee nakoat ha.
Is this the way? gilan nay kaka?
Is it getting dark? kamman boat ka?
It is cold, kuddiow diam.
I want a boat to go to Wah-kyoung, t'chee menam k'bang lakow Polaw-
tope.
I won't go away, t'chee lakow ha.
Nat grandfather, help (my) sickness (and) to-morrow (if I am) cured (I
shall) give (you a) bottle of liquor, katoiee ehbap annanee maket
thee-how bolahigh maon elap prang.
Seven days, loojoo alloiee.
She is pounding rice, gna moitoiee pallah.
Sit down here, nadok tinnee.
Some time ago, cha laing.
The day before yesterday, booboat tyēt.
They are very frightened, manoot nyoo nakoat laing.

PHRASES BY MR. BRAYTON.

Where are you going? la-kow-bhee-tamle?
God is good (God good), too-da a-moong.

Man is not good (man good not), may-sha a-moung-ha.

God loves man (man God loves), may-sha Too-da lak.

God governs man (man God governs), may-sha Too-da toa-na.

What do you want? (desire what?) lak ha-naung.

I cannot go (I go can not), t'see la-kow tadn ha.

*If the boat hits the sand it will be ruined (boat hit sand ruined is) k'bang
k'nak ka-nai ka-tam kak.*

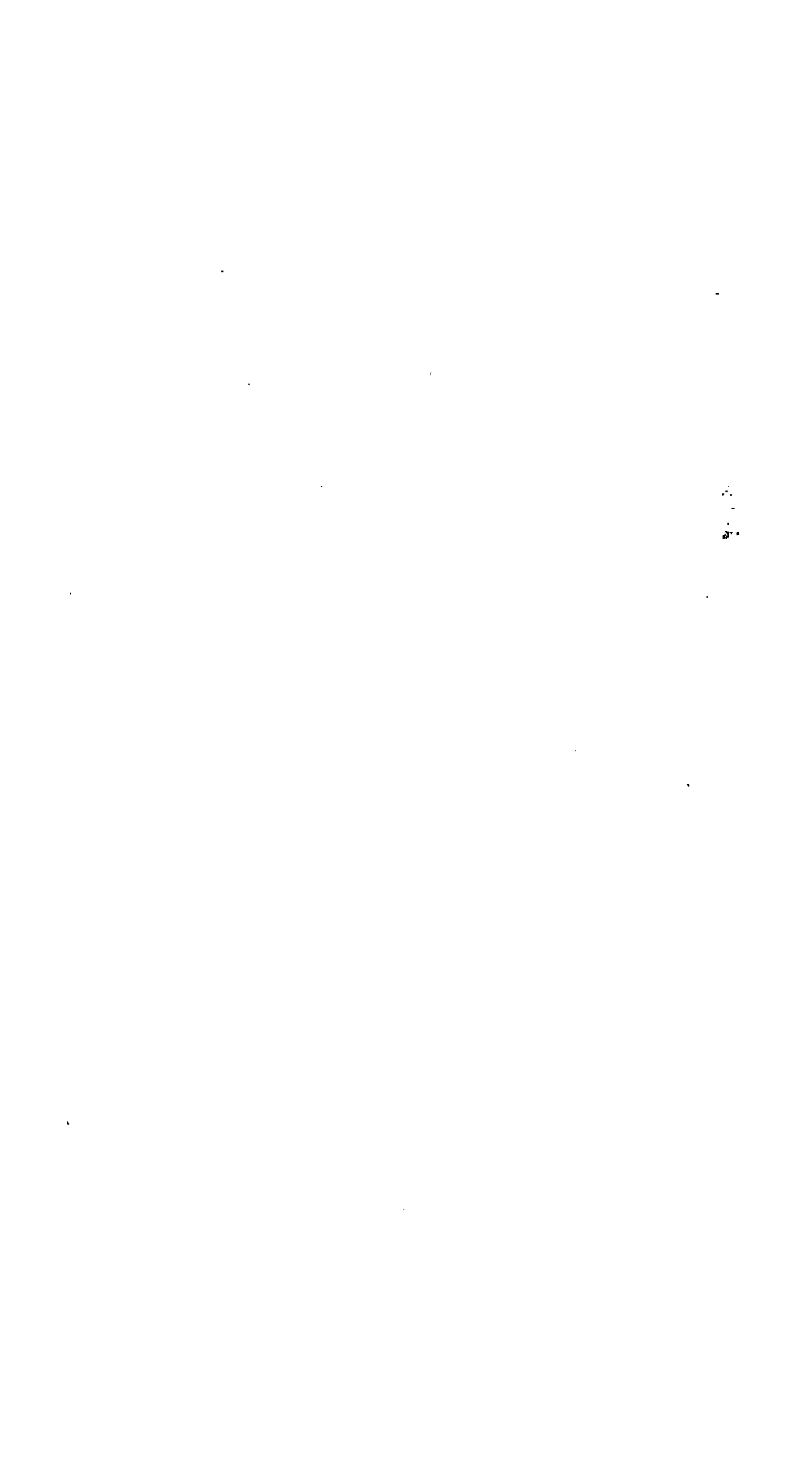
Men's Names.

Ee'chan.
Shwe Gyo.
Nawthay.
Tawpot.
Tweegeen.
Shwe Doke.
Tgee-em.
Toombow.
Assan.
Tan-nae.
Dooloon.
Akka.

Women's Names.

Mapew.
Mayjaw.
Ma-toang, Selung name Ee-toom.
Mellah.
Mattew.
Maleik.
Mayah.
Mayjoat.
Aycoam.
Menyien.
Eh-meh.
Matgee.
Ma-ma.

THE END





SELUNGS OF ELPHINSTONE ISLAND.





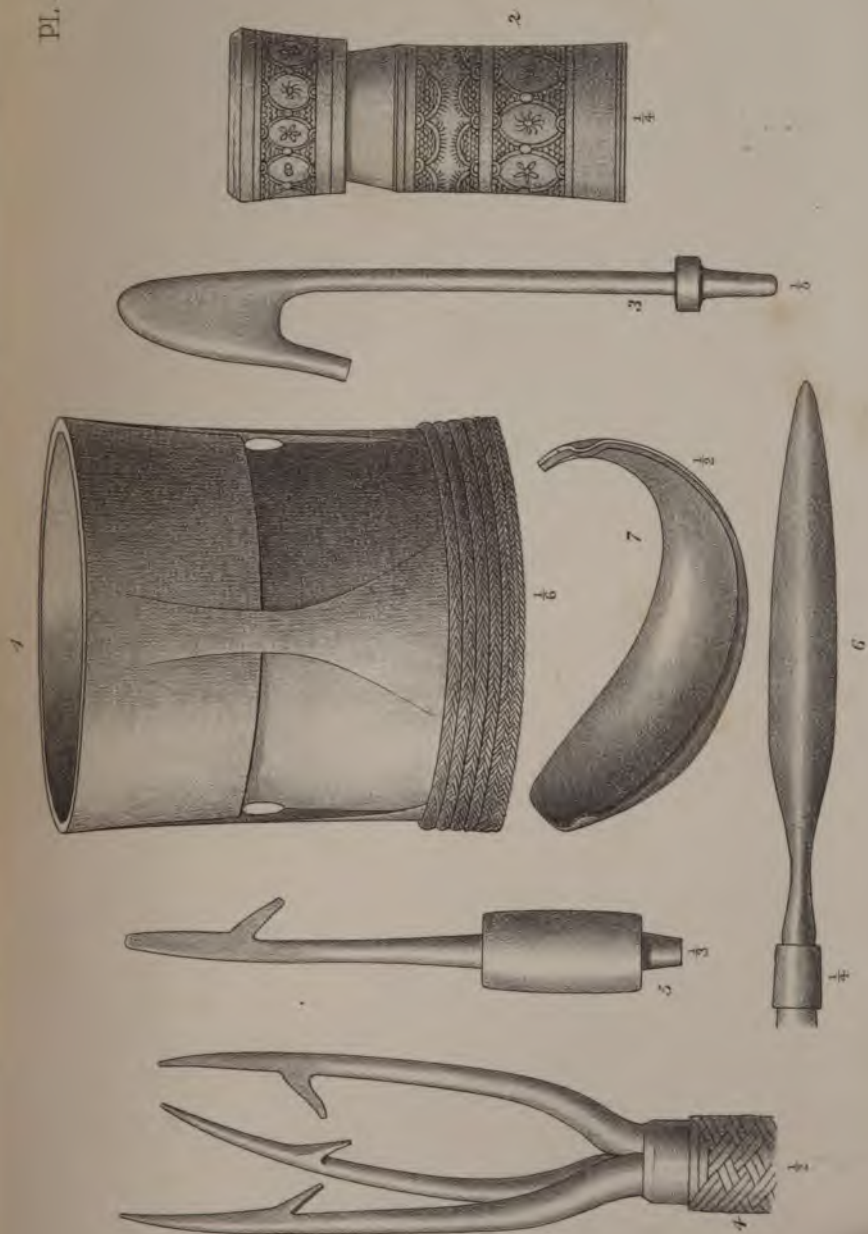
A GROUP OF SELUNGS, MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO.

1



SELUNG BOATS AT LOW WATER, ELPHINSTONE ISLAND,
MERGUI ARCHIPELAGO.





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